

Flexibility Training: Myths and Misconceptions

MYTH #1

Stretching hurts.

False. When done correctly stretching should not be painful.

MYTH #2

Pulling harder and faster will create a better stretch.

False. Muscle fibers contain a protective mechanism that will resist a stretch if done too hard or too fast.

MYTH #3

People are not strong when they become more flexible.

False. Power is the combination of movement and strength, without flexibility they would be limited.

MYTH #4

No stretching is needed if people are already in shape.

False. Being in shape has three components: Strength, endurance, and flexibility. Many people who are strong, and have good endurance are still not truly in shape because they have inadequate flexibility.

MYTH #5

The farther a person can stretch the better.

False. The body has natural limitations that should be considered. These limitations increase as people age which means that they may not be performing the same stretches or stretching to the same degree as when they were younger.

MYTH #6

People should stretch to warm-up before they exercise.

False. It is best to warm-up before stretching. Stretching a cold muscle is uncomfortable and can lead to an increased risk of injury. Muscles can be warmed up by doing an activity at an easy pace, taking a brisk walk, or performing gentle calisthenics. It is critical to stretch after an activity to keep the muscles from tightening as they cool.



FLEXIBILITY TRAINING: MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

Talking Notes

POINTS TO REVIEW

1. Stretching should not be painful or performed with quick movements.

Stretching is a way of opening up the muscles so oxygen can flow to the working parts. Stretching properly, without pain and without bouncing is the most effective way to do this.

2. Flexible muscles are more efficient.

Stretching is a critical component of fitness. Flexible muscles can generate force more quickly and can perform for longer periods.

3. Muscles need to be warmed up before they can stretch easily.

Human muscle tissue is prone to tearing when it is cold. This is why it is important to first warm a muscle up before stretching it. This can be accomplished by performing light calisthenics or taking a brisk walk before you stretch. Muscle is much easier to move when it is warm.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How far should a person be able to stretch?

2. Why is flexibility an important part of fitness?

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