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# Simple stretches

Stretch out to limber up after your workout routine

Lots of you will return to exercise with renewed vigour after the excesses of the holiday season. However a sudden increase in exercise frequency and intensity may lead to muscle soreness or injury. Adding the following post-workout stretches to your routine will help to keep you limber.

## Piriformis stretch

**Piriformis is a hip muscle – keep it flexible to avoid lower back pain.**

Lay on your back and flex one hip to 90 degrees. Keep your bum flat on the floor,

pull your knee across your body and rotate your thigh by holding your shin and pulling it towards you. Hold for one to two minutes, and repeat on the opposite side.



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## Telescope arms thoracic rotation stretch

**A tight upper spine is often compensated for by too much movement in the lower back and neck, which can lead to injury.**

Lay on your side with your head supported by a cushion or folded towel. Bring your knees half way to your chest keeping your shoulders, hips

and feet in a straight line. With your arms in front of you, rotate your top arm in an arc trying to touch the floor with the back of your hand behind you. Repeat this 10 times on each side, ensuring you keep your knees together and prevent your pelvis from rolling over.



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## Rectus femoris stretch

**Rectus femoris is a two-joint muscle spanning your hip and knee joints. Loss of flexibility in this muscle can cause lower back and hip pain.**

Kneel on a cushion, put one foot flat on the wall behind you, and the other foot flat on the floor in front of you. Keep your pelvis horizontal (hips level) and squeeze your bum and tummy muscles to try and lift your pubic bone upwards, i.e. tilt your pelvis to flatten your lower back. This gives a strong sensation of stretch along your thigh. Raise your arm on the same side as the stretching leg to increase the stretch. Hold for 1-2 minutes and repeat on the opposite side.



2

## Hamstring stretch

**Tight hamstrings can lead to lower back pain.**

Lay down on your back in a doorway, and put one leg up the wall with your heel on the door frame, keeping your torso and opposite leg flat on the floor. Keep

a slight long arch in your lower back and slide your heel up the doorframe until you feel a stretch on the rear of your leg. Keep your bum on the floor and hips level. Hold for 1-2 minutes, and repeat on the opposite side.



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