

# Warm-up exercises for the legs

The aim of the warm-up period for all athletes is to ensure top performance and reduce the chance of injury, especially early in a sporting event.

- The warm-up should begin with 10 minutes of slower, easier activity such as slow jogging, running on the spot, skipping or cycling.
- The stretching exercises should be gentle at first and should not overstrain or tire or be painful.
- The leg exercises are in addition to general exercises for other parts of the body.
- Ideally, a tracksuit should be worn.

## The exercises

The drawings illustrate stretches for the left leg. Stretch until the muscle just begins to feel tight (*stretch point*). It is important to hold the stretch position for 20-30 seconds, relax for 10 seconds and repeat each exercise for each leg. The stretching program should last 10-20 minutes. A practical program is to perform each exercise 2 or 3 times on each leg.

## Hip stretching

### Adductors

Stand with your feet apart. Bend one knee while keeping the other straight. Bend until a stretch is felt in the groin and inner thigh (stretch point).



*Adductor stretch*

### Flexors (iliopsoas)

Lie on your side. Grab the ankle of the uppermost leg with your hand. Pull the ankle backwards and slightly to the side.



*Flexor stretch*

## Thigh stretching

### Hamstrings

Place the heel of the right leg on a low table or chair. Keep the knee straight. Reach forwards with both hands until you reach stretch point.



*Hamstring stretch*

## Quadriceps

With one hand supporting the body, grasp the ankle with the other so that the foot is pulled up towards the buttock until you reach stretch point.

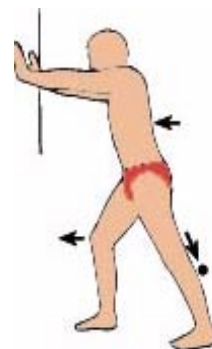


*Quadriceps stretch*

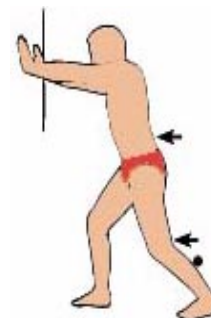
## Calf/Achilles tendon stretching

### Calf muscles

1. Stand about 1.5 m from the wall and lean against it. Keep your left knee straight and your left foot flat on the floor. Bend your right knee forwards until you reach stretch point.
2. Stand in a similar position, but bend the left knee so that stretch is felt deeper and lower in the leg.



*Calf muscle stretch 1*



*Calf muscle stretch 2*

It is very important to *warm down* by repeating the gentle stretching exercises and jogging for several minutes after sporting activity.