

**READY FOR A PAINFREE SUMMER...**

**SPECIAL APRIL OFFER 15 min FREE Assessment.**

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### **The Art of Stretching**



I often get asked questions about stretching. How often should I stretch? For how long should I stretch?

So, I thought I would summarize the key points of stretching below.

As physiotherapists we differentiate between 2 kinds of muscle stretching.

### Rehabilitation stretches and conformed stretches.

Rehabilitation stretches are when you hold the stretch longer than 16 seconds. We tell the client to slowly count to 20 ensuring that 16 seconds have passed. The reason for holding the stretch this long is that research has documented that within the muscle tendon, there is a receptor called the Golgi Tendon. This tendon is activated once the muscle has been stretched for 16 seconds. It then sends a message to the brain, that the muscle is being stretched and the brain replies that the muscle should relax. It does, which influences the tensile tension of the muscle by adversely affecting reaction time and force output. This effect is known to last for an hour.

*Rehabilitation stretches are therefore NEVER advised before physical activity, but instead AFTER activity and as part of a program to become more flexible.*

The stretch should be held for the count of 20-30, repeated 3 times with a 30 second rest in between. Rehabilitation stretching is done as part of your warm down. Research advocates 3-4 times daily for maximum effect.



### **Conformed stretches**

Conformed stretches you hold no longer than 10 seconds. The reason is to get a sense of stretch but without activating the Golgi tendon receptor and thus affect the reaction time and force output of the muscle.

This stretch is perfect to do prior to physical activity, as it will give you a sense of loosening up without affecting your performance.

Stay safe – remember to stretch the right way!

## References:

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