

Stretching for Flexibility in Tennis:

A QUICK & EASY ROUTINE FOR STRETCHING THE MUSCLES USED IN TENNIS

From TennisFixation.com

This static stretching routine is designed for tennis players. It can help you increase your range of motion and reach and reduce your chance of injury. Static stretches are those where you stretch a muscle and then hold the position for several seconds. To get the best results from a static stretching routine, apply these tips:

1. **Stretch AFTER physical activity, not before.** Static stretching is best performed during your cool down after you play tennis, following drills or a lesson, or even later in the day, like at a time of day when you're not exercising. I do my own static stretching routine in the evening, while I'm watching TV, because the exercises are simple and quick to perform and don't interfere with all of the important TV shows I'm keeping up with.
2. **To increase flexibility and range of motion, perform stretching exercises when the body is warm.** If you perform your stretching at some other than right after physical activity, like say when you're watching TV in the evening as some people do, you can do several jumping jacks to get your blood pumping and your body warmed-up.
3. **Move smoothly and slowly and breathe deeply.**
4. **Complete a range of stretching exercises for different muscle groups.**
5. **Hold each stretch for 10-20 seconds and repeat each exercises 2 to 3 times in succession.** Initial tightness should gradually diminish as you hold the stretch.
6. **Stretch only as far as comfortable, not to the point of pain, and do not lock your joints or bounce.** Do NOT stretch to the point of pain. This does not help. It just hurts. And do not bounce as this basically is the same as stretching to the point of pain. Ease slowly in and out of each stretch and continue breathing as you hold the stretch.
7. **Perform stretching exercises at least 3 times a week and ideally 5 times per week.**

In the following pages, you'll find a very simple routine to stretch the areas of your body that you use most frequently when playing tennis and that are often the most tight and sore. Be sure to apply the tips above when going through this routine to ensure that you get the most benefit from each exercise. Perform each exercise 5 to 10 times. Go through the routine at least once, but 2 to 3 times if you have the time. The entire routine should take just 10 to 20 minutes to perform depending on how many times you go through it.

DISCLAIMER: This exercise program and all of its activities and advice are intended for educational and instructional purposes only. As with any exercise, fitness, stretching or flexibility program, you should consult with your doctor and consider any current or past health conditions or injuries before participating. Kim Selzman and TennisFixation.com assume no liability or responsibility for injuries incurred as a result of this program.

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Calf Stretch - Figure 1



Calf Stretch - Figure 2



1. Calf Stretch: Stand with right foot forward and left foot back, toes forward, in a lunge position (Figure 1). Keeping your left heel on the ground, drop slowly into a lunge (Figure 2). You should feel a stretch in your left calf. Hold for a few seconds and then return to starting position. Perform 5 to 10 repetitions. Repeat with feet reversed, stretching your right calf.

Standing Hip Flexor Stretch - Figure 1



Standing Hip Flexor Stretch - Figure 2



2. Standing Hip Flexor Stretch: Stand in the lunge position, with right foot forward and left foot back, toes forward (Figure 1). Slowly lower into a lunge, pushing left hip forward with left heel lifting from ground (Figure 2). You should feel a stretch in your left hip flexor area. Hold for a few seconds and then return to starting position. Perform 5 to 10 repetitions. Repeat with feet reversed, stretching your right hip flexor.

Sumo Squat with Forward Fold - Figure 1



Sumo Squat with Forward Fold - Figure 2



3. Sumo Squat with Forward Fold: Stand with feet forward, slightly more than shoulder width apart, knees bent and arms extended. Knees should be centered over heels (Figure 1). Fold forward at your waist, reaching hands to floor (Figure 2). You should feel a stretch in your back and in your hamstrings. Hold for several seconds and then return to starting position. Perform 5 to 10 repetitions.

Side Lunge - Figure 1



Side Lunge - Figure 2



4. Side Lunge: Stand with feet forward, slightly more than shoulder width apart, knees bent and arms extended. Knees should be centered over heels (Figure 1). Reach with right hand to left toes, extending right leg and reaching with left hand up behind you (Figure 2). You should feel a stretch in your right leg, your torso and through your chest. Hold for a few seconds. Repeat with opposite hand, reaching to toes of opposite foot. Perform 5 to 10 sets.

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Knee to Chest - Figure 1



Knee to Chest - Figure 2



5. Knee to Chest: From a standing position, bring one knee to chest, holding with both arms and balancing on your opposite foot (Figure 1). Hold for several seconds and then release. Repeat with opposite leg. Perform 5 to 10 sets.

Cross Arm Stretch - Figure 1



Cross Arm Stretch - Figure 2



6. Cross Arm Stretch: While standing, place one arm directly across your chest. Use your opposite hand to pull that arm across your chest until you feel a stretch in your upper arm and shoulder (Figure 1). Hold for several seconds and release. Perform 5 to 10 repetitions. Repeat with your other arm (Figure 2).

Tricep Stretch - Figure 1



Tricep Stretch - Figure 2



7. Tricep Stretch: Reach one hand behind your head by bending your elbow and attempting to reach down the center of your back. Use your opposite hand to gently pull on your elbow to increase your reach (Figure 1). You should feel a stretch in your upper arm and into your shoulder and back. Hold for several seconds and release. Perform 5 to 10 repetitions. Repeat with your other arm (Figure 2).

Wrist Flexor Stretch - Figure 1



Wrist Flexor Stretch - Figure 2



8. Wrist Flexor Stretch (both ways): With arm extended in front of you and palm facing down, pull your fingers down with your opposite hand (Figure 1). You should feel a stretch along your forearm and into your wrist. Hold for several seconds and then release. Perform 5 to 10 repetitions on each arm. Using the same motion, but with palm facing up, pull your fingers down with your opposite hand (Figure 2). You should feel a stretch along the inside of your forearm and wrist. Hold for several seconds and then release. Perform 5 to 10 repetitions on each arm.

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Sitting Forward Fold - Figure 1



Sitting Forward Fold - Figure 2



9. Sitting Forward Fold: Sit on ground with legs in front of you and toes up (Figure 1). Slowly reach towards your feet with both hands, leaning forward and holding to the point of your farthest reach (Figure 2). You may reach your feet or you may only reach your ankles or your shins. You should feel a stretch in your hamstrings (back of thighs) and your back. Hold for a few seconds and then return to starting position. Perform 5 to 10 repetitions.

Groin Stretch



10. Groin Stretch: Sit on ground with soles of feet together in front of you. Holding at your ankles, slowly push your knees towards the floor. Hold for a few seconds and then release. Perform 5 to 10 repetitions. For an advanced stretch, slowly push arms down on inside of legs, pressing knees towards the floor.

Child's Pose - Figure 1



Child's Pose - Figure 2



11. Child's Pose: Sit back on your heels with knees forward and spread slightly (Figure 1). Reach forward with your arms as far as is comfortable, dropping your head between your shoulders and sitting back into your heels (Figure 2). Hold for several seconds and then release, sitting up. Perform 5 repetitions, trying for a deeper stretch each time.