SPORTS PERFORMANCE
BASIC STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

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All exercises should be performed 3-4x/week and may prevent an injury.
It is recommended to consult a medical professional before beginning any exercise program if concerned with an injury.

The Bridge:

This is a strengthening exercise for your back, hamstring, quads, calves and glut muscles:

- With your knees bent and feet flat against the floor, begin by contracting your abdominal muscles to stabilize the back, hips and pelvis.
- Then lift your hips up off the floor into a bridge so your body forms one straight line from your shoulders to your knees.
- Do not attempt to go higher than this position and do not allow your back to arch.
- Beginners- Perform 3 sets of 8-10 repetitions.
- Advance Single Leg Bridges
- With legs bent, lift buttocks off floor.
- Slowly extend (L) knee while keeping stomach tight.
- Slowly lower buttocks back to ground while keeping (L) knee extended straight out.
- Repeat on opposite side.
- Repeat 10-15 times/set; 3 sets/session.

Rose Wall Slides:

This is a strengthening exercise for your hip muscles:

- The lateral hip muscles are required to be strong and stable to optimize running performance.
- To complete the exercise, lie on the floor on your side.
- Your body should be up against the wall.
- Place a towel or pair of socks between the heel of your top leg and the wall.
- While contracting your abdominals, tighten your gluts and slowly slide the towel up the wall.
- Move the leg up 75% of your available range and hold at top for 2 seconds.
- Beginners - Perform 3 sets of 8-10 repetitions and make sure you are moving slowly and controlled.

Plank/Side Plank:

This is a strengthening exercise for the core muscles:

- Lie on the ground supporting your upper body on bent elbows and tucking your toes underneath you.
- Contract your abdominal muscles by pulling your navel towards your spine so your body forms a straight line from your head to your feet (or knees for kneeling modified position).
- Tighten your gluts and keep your neck in a neutral/ straight position. Beginners- hold for 30-45 seconds, repeating 3 times.
- As you get stronger increase the hold time to 45-60 seconds, repeating 3 times.

Side Plank:
- With foot on the ground, feet together, elbow and forearm on the ground, push up into a side plank position.
- Hold this position for 30-45 seconds.
- Repeat 3 times on each side.
- **Note:** Modify by performing on knees instead of toes.

Chair Squat with Calf Raise:

- Stand in front of chair.
- Squat backward as is preparing to sit into the chair, then return to standing*
- Once standing, perform calf raise by standing on tip toes.
- Repeat 15 times/set; 3 sets/session
  - *During squat, focus on sitting back and allow minimal-to-no forward movement of your knees, and keep trunk upright. To decrease difficulty, tap your buttock onto the chair, then return to standing.*

(Avoid this exercise if you are experiencing front knee pain.)

Cup Pick Ups:

- Stand on one leg between the last two cups.
- Rotating from your hips, turn to face the first cup.
- Bend from your hip, using your back leg as a pendulum, to pick up the cup.
- Stand up straight and rotate back to a neutral position.
- Repeat steps two and three to place the cup back in its original spot.
- Do this same sequence for all of the cups, and repeat 3-5 times in each spot.
- Repeat on opposite leg.

Contact NovaCare's Injury Hotline with any Questions (866) TRY-NOVA.

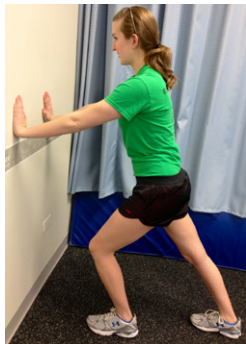# SPORTS PERFORMANCE
BASIC STRETCHING EXERCISES

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NovaCare® REHABILITATION
The Power of Physical Therapy™

Stretches should be performed after activity.
Hold all stretches for 20-30 seconds each and repeat 3 times.

Stretching of the Right Iliotibial Band/IT band:

- Perform the IT-band stretch by standing parallel to the wall.
- With the right hand on the wall, put the left foot in front of the right foot so that the heel of the left foot is against the toe of the right.
- Then lean the upper body away from the object while pushing the right hip towards the wall.
- The stretch should be felt over the outside right hip.

Hamstring Stretch:

- Perform this stretch by placing heel on an object about 16 inches off the ground on a low bench or stair step.
- Keeping your abdominals tight, lean slightly forward keeping your back straight and bend your standing leg to avoid bending over too much.
- The exercise should be felt on back of thigh.

Hip Flexor Stretch:

- Perform this stretch by placing your foot up on a bench or stair step.
- Place your hands over your head and rotate up and away from the standing leg (not pictured).
- Bring hips forward and away from the standing leg until a stretch is felt on the left front of the hip.

Calf Stretch:

- Perform the gastroc stretch by placing hands up against the wall.
- Bring one leg behind the other into a lunge position.
- Be sure that your back leg is straight with the heel on the floor.
- Lean into the wall until the stretch in felt in the calf.

Soleus Stretch (Not Pictured):
- To stretch the soleus muscle, slightly bend the knee of the back leg, keeping your heel on the floor.
- The stretch should be felt closer to the heel and Achilles tendon.

Quad Stretch:

- Perform this stretch by bringing the heel of one foot up towards your buttock.
- Your knee should point towards the ground and you should be standing tall with tight abdominals.
- Your standing leg should be slightly bent.
- The stretch should be felt in the front of the thigh.

Piriformis (Figure 4) Stretch:

- Lay on back with right knee bent and left ankle resting on your right knee.
- Pull your left knee towards your right shoulder until a stretch is felt in your left buttocks.
- Repeat with your other leg.

If you have questions or concerns regarding the prevention and treatment of common running injuries, call the **NovaCare Rehabilitation Injury Hotline: 866-TRY-NOVA (866.879.6682)**.

Like us in Facebook at **www.facebook.com/novacarechicago** and find our photo album titled "Dynamic Stretches". These can be performed before any activity.