COOL-DOWN GUIDE

BOCCE

Special Olympics
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Cool-Down Directions

When your training, practice or sport session is complete, you should always cool-down. A good cool-down allows your body to gradually return to a state of rest.

A typical cool-down includes:
1. Light aerobic activity
2. Static stretching

The aerobic activity in a cool-down should decrease in intensity. It could be a light jog, moving into a brisk walk and finally ending to a slow walk.

After you complete the light aerobic activity, you will want to stretch. Stretching for flexibility is very effective in the cool-down.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE
- Hold each stretch for at least 30 seconds.
- Stretch both sides – if you stretch your right shoulder muscle, stretch the left!
- Stretches should be performed to mild discomfort, but should not be painful.
LIGHT AEROBIC ACTIVITY
The light aerobic activity in a cool-down should decrease in intensity. It could be a light jog, moving into a brisk walk and finally ending to a slow walk.

STATIC STRETCHES
Unlike dynamic stretches, static stretches consist of one position that is held in place. If you don't have enough time, select a few that focus on the different muscles used in your sport:

- Cross Arm Shoulder Stretch
- Hamstring Stretch
- Kneeling Hip Stretch
- Quadriceps Stretch
- Rounded Back Stretch
- Wrist Flexion and Extension
Cross Arm Shoulder Stretch

**DIRECTIONS**

- Cross your left arm across your chest with your elbow slightly bent. Make sure to keep your left shoulder down away from your ear.
- Place your right hand on the back of your left arm just above the elbow. Pull your left arm in toward your chest until you feel a stretch. Repeat with your right arm.
Hamstring Stretch

DIRECTIONS

- Stand tall with your left foot a few inches in front of your right foot. Lift your left toes.
- Bend your right knee slightly and lean your body forward.
- Reach for your left toes with your left hand. Keep your right hand on top of your right thigh for balance and support.
- You should feel a stretch in the back of your left leg.
- Repeat the stretch with your right leg forward.

NOTE: You can also do this stretch kneeling on the ground.
Kneeling Hip Stretch

**DIRECTIONS**

- Kneel on the ground.
- Take one big step forward. Bend your front leg.
- Push your hips forward and put your hands on your hips. You should feel a stretch in your back leg’s hip area.
- Repeat the stretch with the other leg in front.
Quadriiceps Stretch

DIRECTIONS

• Stand up tall and shift your weight to your right leg.
• Lift your left foot and hold it with your left hand. You may put your right hand on a stable surface, like the back of a chair or wall, to help you balance.
• Pull your left foot toward your body until you feel a stretch in the front of your left leg.
• Switch legs and repeat the stretch on your right leg.

NOTE: You can also do this stretch laying down.
**DIRECTIONS**

- Stand tall and lace your fingers together with your palms facing outward.
- Stretch your arms out in front of you at shoulder level.
- Reach out so that you feel your upper back stretch. Tuck your chin toward your chest and look down.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Joe Wu
Wrist Flexion & Extension

DIRECTIONS

- Sit or stand with your head up and looking forward.
- **Extension:** Turn your palm towards the ground. Use the other hand to pull your hand down toward the ground.
- **Flexion:** Turn your palm face up toward the ceiling. Use the other hand to pull your fingers back toward the ground.
- Switch arms and repeat both stretches.
Benefits of a Cool-Down

It is just as important to have a good cool-down as it is to have a good warm-up. A good cool-down allows the body to gradually return to a state of rest.

**Physical and Mental Benefits**

- Decrease heart rate
- Decrease breathing rate
- Decrease body and muscle temperature
- Returns rate of blood flow from the active muscles to resting level
- Decrease muscle soreness
- Improve flexibility
- Increases the rate of recovery from exercise
- Promote relaxation