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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.
Sample Cool-Down

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
- Neck Flexion and Extension
- Side-to-Side Neck Stretch
- Triceps 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.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Jimmy Tadlock
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.
Neck Flexion & Extension

DIRECTIONS

- Sit or stand with your head up and looking forward.
- **Flexion:** Slowly drop your chin toward your chest and look down. Hold for a few seconds return to starting position.
- **Extension:** Slowly tilt your head back and look up to the sky. Hold for a few seconds return to starting position.
- Return to the starting position and repeat each, slowly moving your head down and up.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Jimmy Tadlock
Side-to-Side Neck Stretch

DIRECTIONS

• Sit or stand with your head up and looking forward.
• Slowly drop your right ear towards your right shoulder, keeping your shoulders down. Hold for a few seconds return to starting position.
• Slowly drop your left ear towards your left shoulder, keeping your shoulders down. Hold for a few seconds return to starting position.
• Return to the starting position and repeat, moving your neck in both directions.
Triceps Stretch

DIRECTIONS

- Stand or sit tall with your left arm by your ear. Bend your elbow so that your hand touches your back.
- Reach over your head with your right arm. Grab your left elbow with your right hand. Pull your left arm even closer to your ear. You should feel a stretch in your upper left arm.
- Repeat the stretch with your right arm by your ear and your left arm grabbing your right elbow.
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.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Robbie Albano
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