

COOL-DOWN GUIDE



SOFTBALL

***Special
Olympics***





Special Olympics **Health**

MADE
POSSIBLE BY **Golisano** FOUNDATION

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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:

- Butterfly Stretch
- Cross Arm Shoulder Stretch
- Downward Dog
- Figure Four Stretch
- Hamstring Stretch
- Knee to Chest
- Quadriceps Stretch
- Seated Rotation Stretch
- Side Stretch
- Standing Straddle Stretch



Butterfly Stretch

DIRECTIONS

- Sit on the ground with the bottoms of your feet touching each other.
- Let your knees fall toward the floor. Your feet should be close to your body.
- Sit tall and lean forward over your feet.
- You should feel a stretch in your groin.



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.



Downward Dog

DIRECTIONS

- Start on your hands and knees. Curl your toes under and raise up your hips and straighten your legs as much as possible.
- Keep your arms and legs straight.
- Keep your toes pointed forward and let your head hang down.



Figure Four Stretch

DIRECTIONS

- Lay on the ground with your right knee in the air.
- Put your left ankle on top of your right thigh.
- Grab underneath your right thigh. Pull your thigh towards your chest. You should feel a stretch in your left hip.
- Switch legs and repeat the stretch.



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.



Knee to Chest

DIRECTIONS

- Lie on your back with your legs straight.
- Bring your right knee toward your chest.
- Wrap your hands underneath your knee. Pull your leg closer to your body until you feel a stretch in the back of your right thigh.
- Repeat the stretch on your left leg.



Quadriceps 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.



Seated Rotation Stretch

DIRECTIONS

- Sit tall on the floor with your legs straight out in front of you.
- Cross your right leg over your left leg. Put your right foot on the floor close to your left knee.
- Turn your upper body towards your right side. Use your right arm to help you sit tall. Use your left arm against your right leg to help you twist. You should feel a stretch in your hip and the side of your back.
- Switch sides and repeat the stretch.



Side Stretch



DIRECTIONS

- Stand tall with your feet a little wider than your hips.
- Bring your left arm up so that it is close to your ear.
- Bend sideways at your waist toward your right side. Keep your arm next to your ear the whole time. You should feel a stretch in the left side of your torso.
- Repeat with your right arm up and your left side bent.



Standing Straddle Stretch

DIRECTIONS

- Stand with your feet slightly wider than shoulder width.
- Bend forward at your hips and reach toward the ground keeping your knees straight.
- Try to place your hands flat on the ground between your feet.



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

