

## **FLEXIBILITY AND STRETCHING BASICS**

Flexibility is the normal range of motion around a joint or group of joints. Stretching exercises are an ideal form of flexibility exercise. The **purposes of stretching are to prepare muscles for activity**, help relax physically and mentally and to assist in preventing injuries and muscle soreness.

**Static or slow, sustained stretching is safe and more effective.**

**Ballistic or bouncing and bobbing type of stretching should be avoided at all times!**

Ballistic stretching will encourage small tears within the muscle and can cause a temporary muscle shortening.

### *Principles of stretching*

- Get into the stretch position slowly with no sudden jerks or bounces
- Do not go past a comfortable stretch
- **Do not stretch to pain**
- **Hold** the stretched position for **30 seconds** although it can be longer - a slow, holding stretch will permit optimal results
- Repeat each stretch **2-4 times**, alternating on each side, and going further into the stretch with each repetition
- Do not be concerned if your muscles feel tight initially - as you practice your stretching program, you will notice a comfortable and gradual improvement
- If you have any further questions, ask us at Metro Health Sports Medicine.

**As with any exercise program, always consult your physician before beginning the program!**