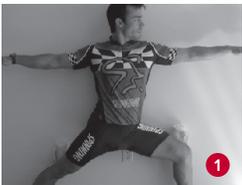


Stretching can be a very valuable asset to your body. Whether you are an elite athlete or occasional exerciser, your body is your instrument for peak performance. Stretching can enable your muscles to function more efficiently and reduce the risk of injury.

Flexibility training can help balance muscle groups that might be overused during a training session or as a result of poor posture. In order to improve any system, an overload must be generated to that system. The same is true for flexibility training: the muscles must be overloaded to increase flexibility. The safest way to do this is with slow, sustained stretches such as yoga asanas. Stretching the hips can alleviate back pain, particularly for cyclists who tend toward tight hips.

Following are some stretches to open the hips, allow for more freedom of movement and release tension in the spinal column.



1. WARRIOR II STANCE

Stand with your back up against a wall. Place your legs about 4 to 4½ feet apart, turning your right foot out 90 degrees so that it is parallel with the wall and your left foot slightly in at 45 degrees. Bend your right knee as close to 90 degrees as you can, keeping the left leg straight. Place a block or towel between your right knee and the wall and do the same with the left leg. Press firmly into both props feeling an opening in both hips. Breathe and enjoy the stretch for 20–30 seconds before changing sides.



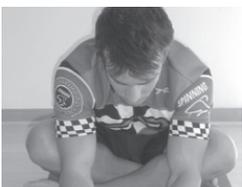
2. TRIANGLE POSE

To perform this pose correctly, a contraction of the deep hip rotators is required to align the femur, knee and foot. Separate the feet about 3½ to 4 feet, turn the right foot out 90 degrees and the left foot slightly in. Feel a firmness in the right buttock and externally rotate the thigh to align the knee with the foot. Maintaining the elongation of the spine, tip the pelvis over the right thigh, reach the right arm as far as you can, and allow the hand to rest on your shin, ankle or foot (wherever your comfort level is). After 5–10 breaths, switch sides.



3. CRESCENT POSE

Step back with the left foot, bend the right knee to a right angle (keeping the right ankle directly under the right knee) and carefully place the left knee on the floor. Place your hands on your right thigh and open through the right hip flexor. If you can, take your hands to the floor on the inside of the right foot. Hold this deep hip stretch for 1–2 minutes before changing sides.



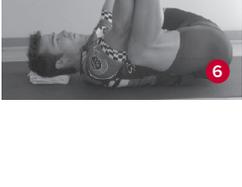
4. BOUND ANGLE POSE

In a seated position, bend your knees, bring your feet together and draw your heels in toward your groin. Clasp your feet with your hands and open your feet like a book, simultaneously opening your knees away from each other. Slowly fold forward, hinging from the hips. Stay here for at least one minute, breathing into the abdomen.



5. PIGEON POSE

In a seated position, bend both knees, place the right ankle on top of the left knee and right knee on top of the left ankle. If this is not possible for your body, place the right leg in front of the left leg in a tight crossed-leg position. (Keep the right ankle as close to the left knee as possible.) Hinge forward from the hips and breathe. After 2–5 minutes, switch legs.



6. HAPPY BABY

Lie on your back and hold onto the outside of your feet. Pull your feet down, opening the hips, and draw your knees as close to the sides of the ribs as possible. Keep your spine long and the tailbone pressing toward the ground. Breathe and hold the pose for 1–3 minutes.

For more information about the Spinning program, visit www.spinning.com or call 800.847.SPIN (7746).

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