



BALLYMENA RUNNERS - COOL DOWN STRETCHES

Cool down stretches help unwind the muscles after a run and can help prevent injuries.

Here's some easy exercises to do after your run. Try to hold each stretch for 20 – 30 seconds. Try to breath in through your nose and out through your mouth as you ease into the stretch.



Easy-Moderate : Hand Down Spine

1. Extend one hand down the center of your back, fingers pointing downward.
2. Use the other hand to grasp the elbow.
3. Exhale slowly, pulling gently downward on your elbow, aiming to take your fingers along your spine.



Easy : Shoulder Strangle

1. Cross one arm horizontally over your chest, grasping it with either your hand or forearm, just above the elbow joint.
2. Exhale, slowly pulling your upper arm in toward your chest.
3. Aim to keep the hips and shoulders facing forward throughout the stretch.



Easy: Calf Correct Foot Position

Foot alignment should be shoulder width apart, you can confirm this by standing either side of a straight line on the floor.

When you take your rear foot back, it should not cross or move away from the midline, your foot should be pointing forward with your heel either flat on the floor, or raised if aiming to develop the stretch.

Your front leg should bend so that when you look down over your knee, you can see the tip of your toes. Lean forward aiming to keep a straight line with your heel, hip and head.



Easy : Soleus

1. Stand with both feet flat on the floor, pointing forward, half a stride apart.
2. Keeping your back straight, with your hands on your hips, exhale and lower yourself down, resting your bodyweight on the rear foot.



Easy Normal Stretch

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, one foot extended half a step forward.
2. Keeping the front leg straight, bend your rear leg, resting both hands on the bent thigh.
3. Slowly exhale, aiming to tilt both buttocks upward, keeping the front leg straight, and both feet flat on the floor, pointing forward.
4. Inhale slowly, and relax from this stretching exercise. Repeat the stretch again, this time beginning with the toes of the front foot raised toward the ceiling, but keeping the heel on the floor.



Easy : Quadriceps Standing

1. Stand holding onto a secure object, or have one hand raised out to the side for balance.
2. Raise one heel up toward your buttocks, and grasp hold of your foot, with one hand.
3. Inhale, slowly pulling your heel to your buttock while gradually pushing your pelvis forward.
4. Aim to keep both knees together, having a slight bend in the supporting leg.



Easy : Side Lunge

1. Stand upright, with both feet facing forward, double shoulder-width apart.
2. Place your hands on your hips, in order to keep your back straight, slowly exhale, taking your bodyweight across to one side.
3. Avoid leaning forward, or taking the knee of the bent leg over your toes. As you increase the stretch, the foot of the bent leg should point slightly outward.
4. To increase the stretch, relax upward, slowly sliding your feet out a few inches to the sides.



Easy : Spine curve

1. Begin the stretch by laying on your front, with your hands close to your chest, fingers pointing upward.
2. Exhale, pushing yourself up with your arms and contracting your buttocks while keeping both feet firmly on the floor.
3. Look up toward the ceiling, to also feel the stretch in your neck.

Remember

- **That your cool down stretches are key to unlocking tight muscles, which is often the cause of injury.**
- **Hold each stretch for a minimum of 20-30 seconds, breathing slowly through your nose, aiming to exhale through your mouth as you ease into the stretch.**