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*"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"*

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## Stretches for Curling

Last week, I received a specific request for an article that would give specific suggestions on how and what muscles to stretch in preparation for a game of curling. Although I would not consider curling a type of cardiovascular exercise (one that raises your heartrate and maintains it there for 20 to 30 minutes, as in running or powerwalking), it is fun and gets your body moving. However, one problem that exists with sports such as curling is that you must stand still for periods of time, followed immediately by bursts of activity (lifting/throwing rocks and sweeping).

When this scenario is repeated several times within each game, the chance of stiff joints and tight muscles being injured significantly increases. Therefore, it is a good idea to warm up well by doing the stretches listed below.

### Hamstring and Low Back Stretch

From a standing position with the feet shoulder-width apart, bend slowly forwards from the hips. Try to keep your knees almost straight, but not locked. Relax your upper body. Go to the point where you feel a stretch in the back of your legs and then hold the position.

### Quadriceps Stretch

Stand with your left hand holding onto something stable for balance. Using your right hand, grab onto your right foot and pull your heel in towards your buttocks. Keep your knees close during this stretch. If you do not feel a stretch in the front of the right hip and thigh, pull your right knee further back behind the left knee. Hold. Repeat with the left side.

### Hip Flexor Stretch

From the standing position, take a large step forward with your left leg while keeping the right leg straight. Now bend the knee of the left leg until you feel a stretch in the front area of the right hip. Make sure the left foot is beneath the left knee or slightly in front of it. Hold. Repeat with the other side.

### Calf Stretch Against Wall

Stand a few feet from a wall and put both your hands on it at shoulder level. Step back with your right leg, keeping it straight, while the left knee bends. With both heels on the floor, lean forward by bending your left knee until you feel a stretch in your calf. Hold. Repeat on the other side.

### Heel Cord Stretch Against Wall

Stand with your hands on a wall at shoulder height. Take a step backwards with your right leg. Your left knee will bend. Now bend the right knee until you feel a stretch in your right heel cord, at the back of the ankle. Hold. Repeat with the left side.

### Groin Stretch in Sitting

Sit on the floor with the soles of your feet together. While holding your toes, lean your upper body forward, bending from the hips. If you do not feel a stretch in the groin, try to keep your knees further down towards the floor and bring your heels closer to your seat. Hold. To isolate one side of the groin more than the other, push one knee downward with your hand while you lean forward.

### Low Back/Hip Stretch

Lie on your back with the left leg straight out and the right knee bent at a 90° angle. Use your left hand on the outside of the right knee to pull the right leg across the left leg, and downward to the floor. Turn your head towards an outstretched right arm. You should feel the stretch in the lower back and outside of the right hip. Hold. Repeat for the left side.

### Shoulder/Lats Stretch

Kneeling on a mat, reach straightforward with the right hand as far as you can reach. You can rest your head on your left arm. Now lean backwards until you feel a stretch in your shoulders, or sides, upper or lower back. Hold. Repeat with the other side.

### Forearm/Wrist Stretch

Assume an "all fours" position—on your hands and knees. With your palms flat on the floor, turn your hands so that the fingers point towards your knees. Lean back with your buttocks towards your heels until you feel a stretch in the front of your wrist and forearms. Hold.

### Triceps Stretch

With your arms overhead, use your left hand to pull the right elbow behind your head. You should feel the stretch in your right triceps. Hold. Repeat with the left arm.

### Chest Stretch in Doorway

Stand in a doorway with your hands holding either side of the doorframe at shoulder level. Lean your body forward until you feel a stretch in your chest and front shoulders. Hold. You can vary the angle of your hands so that they are above shoulder level to stretch different areas of the chest.

In addition to the above stretches, it is also a good idea to see your chiropractor regularly. By doing this, when it is time for your game of curling, your joints and muscles will already have their full range of motion and an injury will be that much more unlikely.