

To Stretch or Not to Stretch - That is still the question

Many people arrive at the golf course 10 to 15 minutes before their tee time. They may hit a few balls to warm up, roll a few putts and head to the first tee. Those same people will often complain after their round, that they played a better back nine than they did front nine. Why? Because it took them 4 to 5 holes to warm up and find a rhythm.

When talking about stretching, it is important to understand what are your goals? Are you trying to develop and maintain flexibility or are you trying to prepare for athletic/recreational activity. The answer to that question should determine approach to stretching. If your goal is to improve your flexibility, performing targeted static stretches for prolonged periods (10-30 seconds) will help you get there. **Static stretching** is a very beneficial post exercise/activity. The muscle is warm and receptive to prolonged stretching. This approach can aid in removing harmful acid waste products from the muscle. If your goal is to warm up before activity, **dynamic stretching** is the best approach. In dynamic stretching such as moving your arms back and forth in front of your chest or over your head, your focus should be on smooth continuous movement through a non-painful range of motion. This can be as simple as doing neck circles, arm circles or trunk twists. If balance is a concern, hold on with one hand while you move the opposite extremity. 5 to 6 repetitions for each movement should be sufficient to increase blood flow and muscle activation. A nice brisk walk could also be considered great dynamic stretching.