

Stretching does not prevent or reduce delayed-onset muscle soreness

Clinical question	Does stretching before or after exercise prevent or reduce post-exercise muscle soreness?
Bottom line	Stretching before or after exercise had minimal or no effect on the muscle soreness experienced between half a day and three days after exercise in young healthy adults. The duration of stretching applied in a single session ranged from 40 to 600 seconds. Effects of stretching on other outcomes, such as injury and performance, were not examined in this review.
Caveat	The trials were mostly small (involving between 10 and 30 participants) and of poor quality. Nine were conducted in laboratories using standardised exercises.
Context	Early investigators hypothesised that unaccustomed exercise would cause muscle spasm and many people stretch prior to or after engaging in physical activities, such as sport. Although the muscle spasm theory was discredited, the practice of stretching persists. The perception is that stretching will reduce the risk of injury, prevent or reduce soreness after exercise, or enhance athletic performance.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Herbert RD and de Noronha M. Stretching to prevent or reduce muscle soreness after exercise. Cochrane Review 2007, Issue 4. Art No.: CD004577. DOI:10.1002/14651858. CD004577.pub 2. This review contains 10 trials involving 180 participants.
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