

OXY Fat Loss

# You Ask! We Answer...

## Q DO I HAVE TO STRETCH?

BY THE TIME I'M DONE MY WORKOUT, I HAVE TO RUSH OUT TO GET BACK TO WORK OR HOME. STRETCHING ISN'T ALWAYS AN OPTION. IS IT REALLY IMPORTANT?

BY ALICIA REWEGA, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, CLEAN EATING MAGAZINE



**THERE ARE A LOT OF REASONS** people blow off stretching. One being that many women today are pressed for time. With just an hour to get in and out of the gym, most women devote their time to what they feel delivers the most bang for their proverbial buck: the caloric

burn. Another reason we sometimes skip the all-important step of stretching is that we've never actually seen any real gain from doing it, or repercussions from not doing it, so we assume that it must not be too crucial a step. But one of the biggest reasons we sometimes bypass the cooldown phase stems from sheer confusion. For years, we've received conflict-

ing direction on the topic – before a workout, after, during, or all three?

### WHY STRETCH?

Leigh Crews, 2011 IDEA Instructor of the Year, **ACE** spokesperson and former Reebok Master Trainer says she's been instructing long enough to see a pattern when it comes to stretching. In all her years instructing group fitness classes,

without fail, as soon as the music mellows and the lights dim, a good portion of the class gets up, puts their mats away and makes their quiet escape. But according to Crews, stretching is key to bringing oxygen, blood flow, mobility and flexibility back to tired muscles, and it helps to metabolize by-products for quicker recovery, so she urges people to stick around and spend a few moments stretching it out. "If you neglect to stretch, over time, you run the risk of injury, bad posture, round shoulders, a forward chin, tighter hamstrings

and tight hip rotators," she explains. Also, keep in mind that you should never stretch an injured muscle. It's very important that you allow the appropriate amount of time for healing. And never do a static stretch before an explosive activity such as plyometrics.

### WHICH ONES?

There are more stretches out there than you'll know what to do with. For a slew of stretches to choose from, Crews recommends the book *Full-Body Flexibility* by Jay Blahnik (Human Kinetics, 2010). There are a few different methods for



COLORFUL CITRUS MAKES A GREAT GARNISH FOR FISH.

## Orange you glad you eat tangerines?

Canadian researchers have pinpointed a flavonoid in tangerines that may help in the fight against obesity. When mice were fed a high-fat "Western" diet supplemented with Nobiletin – a substance found in these citrus fruits' peels – they gained weight normally, without experiencing

an increase in insulin, glucose or cholesterol. On the other hand, a group of mice fed the same diet without the addition of Nobiletin became obese and exhibited signs of metabolic syndrome. Add tangerine zest to a protein shake or a chicken marinade for a delicious fat-burning boost.

### YOUR 15-MINUTE CARDIO FIX

Hop on a bike and try this easy-to-follow – but challenging – calorie-blasting routine.

MINUTES	RPE*
0–2	2–3
3–5	4
6–7	5–6
8–9	8
10–11	5–6
12–13	4
14–15	2–3

\* An RPE of one is sitting idly; an RPE of 10 is an all-out sprint.

# 3000

Number of calories in a typical American Thanksgiving meal, according to the Calorie Control Council. Yowza!

## Med-ball tight rotations

Don't let the speed fool you: keep the motion small and controlled, yet quick, for best results.

**TARGET MUSCLES:** internal and external obliques

**SET UP:** Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, holding a medicine ball with both hands. Extend your arms in front of you at chest height.

**ACTION:** Keeping your hips facing forward and your core tight, rapidly rotate your torso to the right, then to the left. This action is small – the medicine ball should not pass further than your shoulder on each side. Repeat for a total of two to three sets of 20 to 30 seconds each.



**TIP:** IF YOU DON'T HAVE A MED BALL, HOLD A LIGHT DUMBBELL.

**TIP:** KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR RANGE OF MOTION IN A MIRROR.

stretching, too. Here's a brief breakdown:

### Dynamic

**WHAT?** Stretching a muscle by moving through its range of motion. This is done through simple movements such as leg

**Never stretch an injured muscle.** It's very important that you allow the appropriate amount of time for healing.

swings, arm swings and torso rotations. "Dynamic rotation is often confused with ballistic stretching, which is the forcing of the muscle," explains Crews. An archaic method, ballistic stretching was once used to force the

muscle into flexibility, but research has since proven this to be ineffective and unsafe.

**WHEN?** Dynamic stretches are great anytime, but especially when you first wake up. "You will notice improvements in posture,

as well as more energy and greater mobility," says Crews. They're also good to do before, during and after exercise. **WHY?** Unlike static stretching, dynamic stretches help to warm up and elongate the muscle.

### Static

**WHAT?** Static, like the name implies, means to stretch a muscle to its furthest point comfortably, and then holding it there for a few moments with little to no movement.

**WHEN?** Do these at the end of a workout or sports activity, after the muscles have warmed up. Crews also recommends static stretching before you go to bed so the muscles recover in an elongated state. **WHY?** Static stretches should be a part of your routine because they increase flexibility so the muscle doesn't get tighter over time. "They help to maintain the length of the muscle," says Crews.

### Myofascial

**WHAT?** Stretching out the fascia using a foam roller. The fascia is a layer of tissue surrounding your muscles. "Think of your muscles as a bunch of electrical wires bunched together and wrapped in plastic wrap; the plastic wrap would be considered the fascia," explains Crews. **WHEN?** Safe to do anytime, but can be particularly beneficial when done after high-intensity sports. **WHY?** These stretches relax the fascia to create more mobility. The roller loosens the connective tissue so performance can be improved via a better range of motion. **Q**