

Guidelines for Developing Suppleness (Flexibility)

Note: The points below relate to the method of developing flexibility called static stretching. Examples of stretching exercises for the main muscle groups are provided on the following page.

- ❑ Flexibility exercises should be preceded by a light warm-up involving continuous, dynamic efforts (e.g. light running for 5 minutes).
- ❑ The exercises are performed without the help of a partner and without the application of external force on the limb or joint.
- ❑ The muscle or muscle group must be stretched in a controlled and gradual manner, without any interruption of the movement, until a slight tension is felt. Once the muscle is slightly stretched and relaxed, the athlete must hold the position for 20 to 40 seconds.
- ❑ The athlete should breathe slowly and deeply when performing a stretch.
- ❑ Exercises should be performed on both sides.
- ❑ Each exercise can be repeated 2 to 4 times during a practice session.
- ❑ Quick, sudden movements should be avoided when stretching, especially when the muscle is not sufficiently warm.
- ❑ The cool-down period of a practice session is a good time to perform flexibility exercises because muscles are normally adequately warmed up at that point, and flexibility does not involve intense effort. While athletes are stretching, the coach can gather feedback concerning the practice session and can provide his or her feedback or information as required.



Basic Flexibility Exercises

(illustrations provided by CardiSport, www.cardisport.com)

