

Basics of exercise

Exercises are divided into three different types. These are stretching, strengthening and aerobic. It is important that you work on all three different aspects in order to be able to achieve the maximal benefit for your recovery.

Stretching

These exercises are aimed at improving the flexibility of the muscles. When performing these exercises, the muscle should be put in its lengthened position and held for at least 20 seconds. There should be no bouncing or jerking since this stimulates tightening of the muscles. To enhance relaxation, it will be helpful to incorporate deep breathing with stretching exercises. For example, the muscle can be stretched to a comfortable position and held. Then after a deep breath, try to increase the flexibility by pushing slightly further. However, this should be done at a comfortable level and not painful. It is possible to overstretch.

Strengthening

Strengthening exercises are done with the goal of either increasing power or endurance. To increase muscle bulk or strength, we need to do low repetitions with heavier weights. To improve endurance, we need to do high number of repetitions with light weights. It is important to learn the proper skill of performing an exercise correctly before progressing to doing them with resistance.

Aerobic

Aerobic conditioning is a crucial part of recovery. It gives the benefit of increasing general circulation, improving fitness level which in turn helps the healing process. Aerobic exercises must be done at least three times per week at 20-30 minute interval to be of benefit. Appropriate target heart rate should be achieved within that time period. Biking, walking, running or swimming are all beneficial and depending on your particular type of injury, one might be more ideal than the rest. Biking and running for example, might be contraindicated in certain types of knee problems. Walking, swimming and aquatics are good alternatives. Proper footwear is crucial to avoid further injuries to the lower extremities. In addition, it is important to perform proper warm-up and cool-down exercises with your aerobic training.