

Chapter 15

Knees to Neck: More stretches for diver flexibility

Increased flexibility can make certain aspects of your diving a lot easier, such as getting in and out of your gear, getting back on the boat, and maintaining proper trim while swimming. Hip and leg flexibility can also help you with more advanced finning techniques, such as backwards kicking and helicopter turns.

These stretches fill in the gap between those demonstrated in **Chapter 14 – Preventing Foot and Calf Cramps** and **Chapter 16 – Reaching Your Valves**. Perform the calf stretches first, followed by the stretches demonstrated below, and finish with the shoulder stretches. This toe-to-head order will help you to remember all of the stretches covered in these chapters.

Stretching should not hurt. Do not do any stretch to the point of pain. Move slowly through all movements described below, and hold each stretch for 20-30 seconds. Perform these stretches 4-5 times per week.



Quadriceps Stretch

This stretch can be performed either standing or lying on your side.

1. Grab the instep of your foot.
2. Pull foot towards your glutes until stretch is achieved, keeping thighs parallel.

Hamstring Stretch

1. Sitting on floor, fold one leg and straighten the other in front of your body.
2. Lean your chest towards your knee until stretch is achieved. Keep your back straight and your toes pointed away to isolate your hamstring.





Inner Thigh Stretch

1. While standing, spread your feet as far apart as possible *without* getting a stretch.
2. Squat over one foot as you stretch the inner thigh of the opposite leg. Keep toes pointed away to isolate the adductors.

Inner/Outer Hip Rotation

1. Sit on floor with one knee bent inward and the other bent outward.
2. Keep back straight as you lean over back ankle until a stretch is achieved, then lean over front ankle until a stretch is achieved.
3. Switch legs and repeat.



Hip Flexor Stretch

1. Kneel with one leg forward, keeping back upright.
2. Bend front knee until a stretch is achieved in hip of back leg.

Press Ups

1. Lie flat on your stomach.
2. Keep your body relaxed as you slowly press up off the floor until a stretch is achieved.

Hint: Let your stomach sag- if it's tight, it will interfere with the stretch.



Prayer Stretch

1. Start on all fours.
2. Sit back on your heels and crawl your hands out as far as you can. You should feel a stretch along the sides of your arms and ribcage.

Cat Stretch

1. Start on all fours.
2. Arch your mid back up towards the ceiling, using your muscles to achieve the stretch.



Camel Stretch

1. Start on all fours.
2. Sag your mid back down towards the floor, using your muscles to achieve the stretch.

Back Rotation

This stretch can be performed standing or kneeling.

1. Straighten back, stick out your chest and lightly squeeze your shoulder blades together.
2. Slowly twist around as if to look behind you until stretch is achieved. You should feel a gentle stretch from the base of your skull to the top of your pelvis.



Author's Note

This chapter on stretching from knees to neck is an excerpt from **Fitness for Divers**, a book written by diver and fitness professional Cameron L. Martz. Please visit <http://www.divefitness.com> to find more information on this book and download other fitness articles written specifically for divers, including free workouts, fitness news, and training tips updated weekly.