

# Own the podium

## Week 4: "Long and Limber"

**Flexibility** = "the ability of your joints and body parts to execute their full range of motion."

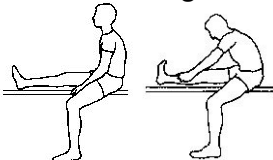
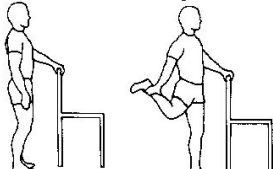
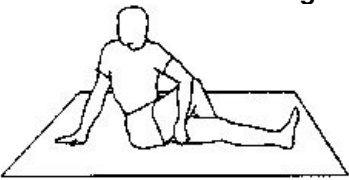
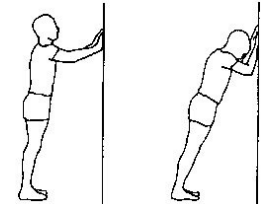
### What's the Importance of Flexibility?

As you age, your muscles naturally lose strength and size and become less supple and stiffer. It is this loss of tissue elasticity that can cause muscles and joints to tighten up. One of the key reasons muscles lose flexibility and can become prone to tears, aches, and pains are because of inactivity. Loss of flexibility by choosing to remain inactive can lead to permanent changes in posture and normal muscle function.

### Benefits of Flexibility

Stretching improves muscular balance and posture by realigning tissue, requiring less energy to move through a greater range of motion and maintaining good posture. Stretching decreases risk of injury, improves physical performance and increases blood and nutrients to tissues. This in turn improves circulation and reduces degeneration of your joints.

### Stretches to Improve Flexibility

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Hamstrings</b></p> 	<p>Sit lengthwise along a bench and place your right leg on the bench. Rest your left leg on the floor or on a footstool. Lean forward over your right leg until you feel a stretch behind your knee and in your calf. Hold that position for 30 seconds. Repeat with the left leg. Stretch the calves by pointing your toes upward and toward your chest.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Quadriceps</b></p> 	<p>Stand near a wall or a piece of sturdy exercise equipment for support. Grasp your ankle and gently pull your heel up and back until you feel a stretch in the front of your thigh. Tighten your stomach muscles to prevent your stomach from sagging outward, and keep your knees close together. Do not lean forward. Hold for about 30 seconds. Switch legs and repeat.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>IT Band and Outer Thigh</b></p> 	<p>Sit comfortably on the floor with your legs out in front. With your left leg straight, put your right foot flat on the ground on the opposite side of your left knee. Reach over your right leg with your left arm so that your elbow is on the outside of your right leg. Slowly turn your head and look over your right shoulder and, at the same time, turn your upper body toward the right hand. Keep your hips flat on the floor at all times. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat on the opposite side.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Calves</b></p> 	<p>Stand 2-3 feet away from a wall. Put your hands against the wall at about shoulder level to support your weight. Lean in toward the wall by bending your elbows until you feel a stretch in the back of your calves. Keep your body erect, your knees straight, and your hips forward. Do not bend at the waist. Make sure your heels remain on the ground. Alternate foot position by turning the feet outward, stretching, then inward, and repeating the stretch. Hold for 30 seconds.</p>

## Self Test

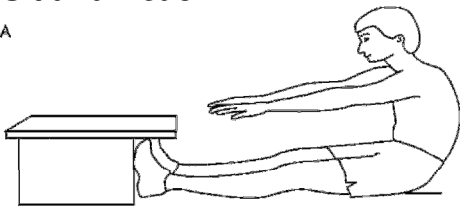
Instructions: Every time you complete a **30 second stretch**, give yourself a check mark.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
✓							
Weekly Total							

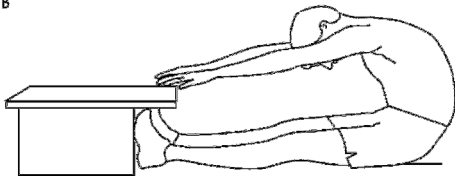
## Race Day Event

### Sit and Reach

A



B



**Muscle:** Flexibility of lower back and hamstrings

**Significance:** Reduce muscle stiffness and soreness.

**Instructions:**

1. Remove shoes and sit on the floor with legs stretched out straight ahead. Keep soles of the feet flat against a box.
2. Both knees should be locked and pressed flat to the floor. The tester may assist by holding them down.
3. With the palms facing downwards, and the hands on top of each other or side-by-side, reach forward along the measuring line as far as possible. Ensure that the hands remain at the same level, not one reaching further forward than the other.

**Test:** The best out of three attempts is recorded.

References: [www.fitness.com](http://www.fitness.com), <http://www.shapefit.com/>