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Does Research Show that Stretching is Helpful or Detrimental to Flexibility and Performance?

An in-depth analysis of the myths, truths and controversies

San Diego – November, 23, 2009 –Presently, uncertainty exists about some proposed benefits of flexibility, including its effect on injury avoidance, muscle soreness prevention, muscular strength training and performance improvement. A recent review article by Dr. Len Kravitz in *IDEA Fitness Journal* attempts to clarify these issues with existing evidence-based science and the most current research update on this component of fitness.

Much of the confusion and controversy surrounding stretching that the article examines in detail includes the following:

- How flexibility can be determined by factors such as age, joint structure, gender, histology, fitness level and physical activity.
- Different [stretching exercises to increase flexibility](#) including
 - Passive stretching
 - Dynamic stretching
 - Static or “hold” stretching
 - Contract-Relax and PNF Stretching
 - Resistance Stretching
- Controversial issues such as
 - Pre-exercise stretching and injury risk
 - Preventing or reducing muscle soreness
 - Impact on muscular strength
 - Impact on performance

“This article symbolizes an important triumph for applied research,” says IDEA executive director Kathie Davis. For many decades, coaches, athletes and others have touted numerous benefits of flexibility. As seen in similar disciplines, the practical beliefs of key pioneers often guide the field. However, as observed with flexibility, many of these beliefs have not proved accurate when challenged through the benchmark of scientific investigation. This does not minimize the importance of flexibility as a component of fitness, yet it better directs professionals and fitness enthusiasts who wish to incorporate it into their training programs.”

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You can access the full article “Stretching--A Research Retrospective,” by Len Kravitz, PhD, in the IDEA Online Library: <http://www.ideafit.com/fitness-library/stretching-research-retrospective>

About IDEA Health & Fitness Association

IDEA Health & Fitness Association is the world’s leading membership organization of fitness and wellness professionals with more than 23,000 members in over 80 countries. Since 1982, IDEA has provided personal trainers, group exercise instructors, fitness program directors, mind-body teachers, health club owners and fitness center managers with pertinent information, health and fitness educational opportunities, career development programs and industry leadership while helping them enhance the quality of life worldwide through safe, effective lifestyle and fitness programs. IDEA members interact with consumers more than 25 million times a year in the fitness marketplace. For more information on IDEA fitness and wellness conferences, publications, professional fitness education and products, member services and other activities, visit [IDEA Health & Fitness Association](#).