

# FLEXIBILITY



## CODY'S COLUMN



### CREATING A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT, GENERATING THE ENERGY TO DEFEAT STRESS, IN THREE EASY STEPS.

The human body goes through so many changes in life. Our lives get more and more packed with stress and our body pays the butcher's bill. Headaches, injuries, knotted muscles and cramps--our bodies are telling us something. We need to adapt! The stress we encounter in our daily life forces these physical reactions of discomfort upon us. We try to cope with the pain, believing it's natural, our coping only takes us so far though: just enough to keep feeling the same way: miserable. But, if we adapt by creating a healthy environment for our bodies, we reduce all our millions of aches, pains, and stresses that sap all our energy to live life the way it was meant to. Adapting your environment to health will naturally generate the energy you need to defeat stress. You'll be back in control of your own life.

#### The Key is Flexibility

Stretching is just about the simplest of all physical activities and it is the essential exercise in the creation of a healthy environment. Flexibility training will: reduce muscle tension, improve circulation, reduce anxiety, stress, and fatigue, improve mental alertness, and decrease your risk of injury. But despite the benefits, you're probably asking yourself: where are you going to find the time to start stretching? And that's where step one comes in.

#### Step One: Use Time To your Advantage

Step one is all about the creation of new habits. What you want to concentrate on here is creating habits that increase your flexibility. It's simple. If you're waiting in line, showering, or even brushing your teeth, you can incorporate simple stretching routines and maximize your time. Start your flexibility program every morning and again make it the last thing you do before bed. Through-out the day just spend a couple of minutes of the time you use for all the mundane tasks of your life, and stretch out while you're working. When you're trying to start a new habit, remember: don't let yourself make excuses not to. It only takes thirty days for a new habit to form in the brain. So, stay the course.

#### Stretching Your Way To A Healthy Environment!

Once you've found ways to maximize your time by incorporating a flexibility routine, it's time to create a homeostatic environment of flexibility. Think about a cat. Cats spend at least eighty percent of their days stretching out. Maybe that's why cats always look so relaxed all the time, and we are these constant stress-balls. Step two is all about becoming a little more cat-like in how we respond to our environment.

#### Step Two: Adaptation

Since you've already found ways to use your time to your advantage, you've already started the development of a healthy environment. It's really all about mastering your responses, and adapting. So you're already on your way. Take some time to review the stretching routines here, once these have become a part of your daily routine, start to develop your own routines that work for you. Just remember to concentrate on consistency in your stretching, rather than intensity. Intense stretching will come in time, when your body is ready. In the beginning, it's all about consistency, just do it every day and the results will surprise you. Use your body And mind together There is definitely a mind-set to be developed here. You've made the decision to start adapting to your environment by forming self-sustaining habits. You are stretching out and clearing away all the tension your body has stockpiled. But the best way to take these routines to the next level is to use your body and mind together. And that is what step three is all about.

#### FLEXIBILITY ROUTINES

:AM



Legs folded, arms forward



On knees and hands, arching back



On knees and hands, rounding back



Pointing opposite leg and arm



Legs folded, arms forward



Arm under shoulder, twisting back



Legs folded, arms forward



On hands and feet aligning back



Legs folded, arms forward



On hands and feet aligning back



Legs folded, arching backwards



Straight back, pushing knees down



Lying down and relaxing

:PM



Legs folded, arms forward



On hands and feet aligning back



Straight legs hinge from hips



Wide legs hinge from hips



On hands and feet aligning back



Legs folded, wide feet, sitting on ground



Forward fold on pillow



Legs folded, arch back on pillow



Knees bent bridge on pillow



Legs wide using band to pull



Lying down, pillow under knees

#### Step Three: Stretching As Meditation

When you're stretching out concentrate on nothing but the stretch. Focus all your mental attention on your body and its response to the stretch. Breathe deep. Concentrate on your breathing and try to breathe into the space by your belly-button. Let your muscles relax! Let your anxieties go, just concentrate on the stretch. Stretching is a balance between strength and flexibility. Remember only stretch as far as your body will let you. Don't push it too far! If you listen to your body it will tell you when to stop. For example, if your muscles start to shake while you are stretching, you're stretching too far. Give it time, focus, and a lot of breathing.