

# Flexibility important in preventing sports injuries

By Staff Sgt. Anthony Milunas  
Health and Wellness Center

Good flexibility is essential for fitness, sports performance and muscle building. It is crucial for the prevention of injury, enhancement of joint function and to allow movements in many sports easier and more efficient.

So before you begin that high intensity workout, let's look at the importance of why you should stretch and be flexible.

**PREVENTION OF MUSCLE INJURY:** Muscles are injured when they are loaded with more than they can tolerate. Muscles can only be stretched to a certain point. Going too far often results in some type of injury. Medical group physicians, along with the HAWC staff, highly recommend a good stretching session prior to any workout routine.

Although there are some studies that show stretching before exercise may actually increase the risk of injury, this is mostly because of improper techniques. One improper technique that is seen quite often at the base fitness center and probably at most gyms is the BOUNCE-TYPE or ballistic stretching. This is done mainly from not having enough time to do a quality type stretching session, so it forces the individual to hurry, thinking that it will warm the muscle faster. Actually, this gives a false sense of being loose and flexible. Bounce-type stretching increases the activity of the muscle receptors (this is where the possibility of injury may originate). Exercising with sensitive stretch receptors increases the chance that the muscle is contracting while in a stretched position therefore, resulting in injury.

Static stretching is one that is highly recommended by our staff and most fitness experts. This type allows for a slow and gradual stretching of the muscle, with a hold time of 10-15



Senior Airman Michael Duhe

**Claire Marana stretches hamstrings prior to exercising.**

seconds. This will give you an increase in joint range of motion without stressing the receptors. It is safe and far more effective than any other type of stretching.

A third type of stretching is PASSIVE. This is with the use of a partner. He/she assists you in moving joints through their range of motion. A greater range can be achieved from this than static, but because you are not controlling the movement, there is greater risk for injury. Passive stretching is a valuable technique and there must be good communication between the person performing and receiving the stretching.

**KEEPING JOINTS HEALTHY:** Most physicians agree that good flexibility is important to good joint health. This concept has been advocated for years by physical therapists. Joints

supported by inflexible muscles and soft tissues are subjected to abnormal stresses that can result in joint deterioration. The knee, for example, mainly supported by the quadriceps (muscles on the front of the thigh) and hamstring (muscles on the back of the thigh) muscles, may start to have a feeling of pain and excessive pressure if these muscles are tight.

Another area of interest is the shoulder. Tight shoulder muscles can compress sensitive soft tissue causing pain and disability in the joint. Poor joint flexibility can result in abnormalities in joint lubrication that can result in deterioration in the sensitive cartilage cells lining the joint.

**AVOIDING BACK PAIN:** This creature accounts for approximately 85-90 percent of the population at some time of their lives. Back pain is often related to poor spinal alignment, which puts pressure on the nerves emanating from the spinal column. Poor flexibility in the spine, pelvis and knees can increase the curve of the lower spine, causing the pelvis to tilt forward excessively. Good flexibility in these areas along with good posture helps prevent abnormal pressures on sensitive spinal nerves.

**MINIMIZING POST EXERCISE SORENESS:** Stretching after exercise has been known to decrease the degree of muscle soreness. Delayed onset muscle soreness, which occurs 1-3 days after exercise, is thought to be caused by damage to the muscle fibers and supporting tissue. Some have stated that post stretching decreases muscle spasms that may occur in reaction to soreness. **IT WORKS!**

Good flexibility lets you move fluidly and efficiently. It's clear that doing proper stretching techniques and exercises prior to any workout or athletic activity helps in prevention of muscle injuries.

If you have any questions or concerns relating to proper stretching, call the HAWC at 963-6022.

## WEEK 5

NAME/RANK \_\_\_\_\_  
DUTY PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
SQUADRON \_\_\_\_\_  
COMMENTS \_\_\_\_\_

### SUNDAY

ATLANTA	@	<b>NEW ORLEANS</b>
BALTIMORE	@	<b>TENNESSEE</b>
CHICAGO	@	<b>MINNESOTA</b>
CINCINNATI	@	<b>CLEVELAND</b>
DALLAS	@	<b>PHILADELPHIA</b>
DENVER	@	<b>OAKLAND</b>
MIAMI	@	<b>INDIANAPOLIS</b>
NEW ENGLAND	@	<b>KANSAS CITY</b>
NY GIANTS	@	<b>ARIZONA</b>
PITTSBURGH	@	<b>BUFFALO</b>
SAN DIEGO	@	<b>DETROIT</b>
SAN FRANCISCO	@	<b>ST. LOUIS</b>
TAMPA BAY	@	<b>GREEN BAY</b>

### Monday night

JACKSONVILLE @ **NY JETS**

### TIE BREAKER SCORE

**SWAMI'S SCORE: 43**

**Swami rules:** (1) Circle your selections of each match-up and pick the tie breaker score—combined score of both teams, without going over (2) Turn entries into the Airlift Dispatch office, room 224 of the Wing Headquarters building by 4:00 p.m., Sept. 10 (3) The Swami's picks are in bold face type. (4) All ties go to the Swami (5) Can only submit one entry per week.

## Perfect week for the Swami

By The Swami

One thing is for sure; the Swami is back on track. After a week off (I still did my picks anyway), the Swami is feeling real good. Of course I had a perfect week (14-0). I've tightened the turban and am ready to start making you rookie football pickers look like clowns. As you can see, I

picked the Cowboys to win in week five. Now, I wouldn't mind if I went 13-1 with the Cowboys being my only loss. I could live with that. Three weeks are down and there have been plenty of surprises thus far. The Jets, Broncos, and Falcons are all 0-3! Don't worry I'm not jumping the ship just yet. The Jets are due to win a game eventually. Next week I will run a list of the top ten pigskin pickers.

I'm in the process of setting up an e-mail account in the Public Affairs office. Do you know who I'll be rooting for this weekend? The Arizona Cardinals! One other thing in case you did not catch a printing error in my picks for week four (I think the printers are Dallas Cowboy fans trying to sabotage my form): my picks are: Arizona, Atlanta, Washington, Pittsburgh, San Diego, New England, Chicago, Jets, Giants, St. Louis, Minnesota, San Francisco, Oakland and Monday night I'm taking Miami. There you have it, read 'em and weep.

## CAFB hosts AF basketball camp

By Tech. Sgt. Daniel C. Murphy  
437th AW Public Affairs

(McAlister Field House)

Nov. 13 – Air Force at College of Charleston, 7:15 p.m. (Johnson Center)

Free tickets for these games will be available. Distribution sites have not been determined.

"This is a chance to showcase Charleston AFB and the talent the Air Force has to offer to the local community," said Eddie Goad, sports director.

This year's Air Force team will be coached by Don Fellars of Pope AFB, N.C. His assistants have not been announced.

"One of the 30 players chosen for the team is Chris Yevchak, 637 AGS, from Charleston AFB," said Goad. "He has a real shot at making the team."

The players coming into camp are talented and have years of experience between them.

"This is not hit or miss, all these guys are good," said Goad. "Many have played Division I college ball. Some have even played at the international level."

Following final cuts for the Air Force team, the players will be off to Port Heuneme, Calif. for the Armed Forces Basketball Tournament against the other services. An Armed Forces Basketball team will then be chosen to compete on the international level.

The Airlift Dispatch will provide ongoing coverage of the training camp.

Charleston AFB will host the 1999 Air Force Men's Basketball Camp Oct. 27 - Nov. 14 at the base Fitness Center. This is the second year running that the tournament will be held here.

This year, 30 active-duty Air Force members are vying for a spot on the 13-player team. A selection process will whittle the number of prospects down as the training continues.

The attendees were chosen by submitting a request for special training through their major command, which forwarded their choices to AF level. The AF chose the best 30 and sends them from all over the world to Charleston AFB.

The camp will involve intensive training and a series of scrimmage games against several local Division I schools and a semi-pro team. Scheduled games are:

Nov. 3 - Air Force vs. Charleston Flyers, 7 p.m. (Starlifter Gym)

Nov. 5 - Air Force at Charleston Southern University, 7 p.m.

Nov. 7 - Air Force vs. Charleston Flyers, 1 p.m. (Starlifter Gym)

Nov. 10 - Air Force at Coastal Carolina, 7:30 p.m. (Kimble Arena)

Nov. 11 - Air Force at Citadel, 7:15 p.m.