



## AFA Fillies Soccer Club—Cooldown Stretches

You can start cool down with very slow jog and shake legs out. Stretches should flow into each other for efficiency and further relaxation (stick with the order below for that reason). During each stretch, concentrate on which muscle you are trying to lengthen, and contract the opposite muscle group. This automatically puts the muscle to be stretched in a longer position and helps it to relax due to neuromuscular effects of opposing muscle groups. For example, during hamstring straddle stretch, you will actively tighten your quad to both straighten your leg (which lengthens the hamstring), but also to cause a neuromuscular effect of relaxation in the opposite muscle group (the hamstring). Because you are actively trying to lengthen the muscle, it should feel slightly uncomfortable at end range, hold it there (not to the point of pain). If you don't go to that uncomfortable end range and just stay at a point before it, you will NEVER lengthen the muscle, it will remain in the shortened position and is therefore not only be a waste of time, but gives you a false sense of flexibility. During each stretch, you should breathe in through the nose, out through the mouth, holding the stretch for 5 good deep breaths. A good rhythm to get into is to take a nice big inhale, then as you exhale, push the stretch to find a new edge, then inhale at that new edge, then repeat cycle for 5 breaths. During each stretch, mentally unwind, relax, and think about the day of training you've just had—the good stuff to relish, the bad stuff to learn from, and how you will prepare for next session.



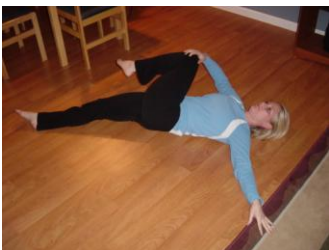
### 1. Double Knees to Chest Low Back

Lie on back, hug knees to chest. Do 2 x 30sec.



### 2. Single Knee to Chest Low Back

Lie on back, hug R knee to chest. Repeat with L. Do 2 x 30sec on each leg.



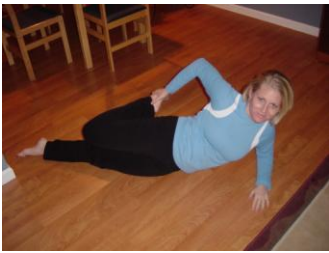
### 3. Single Knee to Chest w/ Rotation Low Back

Lie on back, hug R knee to chest, then rotate it to the L. Repeat with L. Do 2 x 30sec on each leg.



### 4. Piriformis Pretzel

Lie on back, cross R foot to put it on L knee. Draw L knee towards chest to externally rotate R hip. Repeat with L foot on R knee. Do 2 x 30sec on each leg.



### 5. Quadriceps/Hip Flexor

Lie on L side, grab R foot and to bend knee and pull heel to butt. Keeping thigh even with bottom thigh will stretch quad, drawing knee farther back with further stretch hip flexor. Repeat with L leg while lying on R side. Do 2 x 30sec on each leg.

**\*Sit up from sidelying position with bent knees by pushing up with arms.**



### 6. Straddle Hamstring/Adductor/Calf

Sit upright with legs straddled as wide as you can go. Keep legs straight and toes pointed up. Rotate trunk to face R leg, bend forward at the hips to bring chest towards R knee without rounding your shoulders. Repeat to L leg. Do 2 x 30sec on each leg.



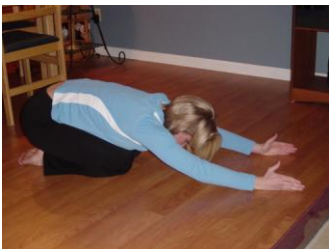
### 7. Butterfly Adductor/Chest

Bend knees from straddle position to bring soles of feet together and hips turned out. Bring feet as close to body as you can. Open chest and bring hands behind butt. Rotate hips out to bring knees down to floor, while you open your chest. Do 2 x 30sec.

### 8. Scapular/Midback (no photo)

Relax legs from butterfly position, clasp hands in front of your body and round your shoulders, in an attempt to open up the space between your shoulder blades. Do 2 x 30sec.

**\*Roll over onto all fours**



### 10. Lat/Low Back/Tricep Praying Position (Child's Pose)

Roll over onto all fours. Sit hips back and stretch arms in front of you, with thumbs up, can even put hands together in "prayer" position for greater stretch. Do 2 x 30sec.

### 11. Kneeling Hip Flexor (no photo) ALTERNATE WITH RUNNER'S STRETCH BELOW

Kneel on your R knee with the L foot on the floor and your L thigh parallel to the ground. Lean your weight into the L leg, then lean torso back so you feel the front of the R hip open and stretch. Do Runner's Stretch from this position, then repeat kneeling on L knee. Do 2 x 30sec on each side.

### 12. Runner's Stretch (no photo)

From kneeling hip flexor position, place hands on floor on either side of your front foot, then "pop" up to attempt to straighten both legs and keep both hands & feet on the floor. Go to the other leg's Kneeling Hip Flexor stretch, then repeat this technique for the Runner's Stretch on the 2<sup>nd</sup> leg. Do 2 x 30sec on each side.

### 13. Nose to Knees Stretch (no photo)

Put your feet together, and bend down to wrap your back of your legs & grab your heels (so your palms are facing forward). Bend your knees as much as necessary to make contact of your nose on your knees, and keep this contact throughout the posture. Slowly start to attempt to straighten your knees, but you HAVE to maintain contact of your nose on your knees. Keep lifting your hips higher & higher to the ceiling and trying to get your legs straight, while maintaining the nose to knees contact. Push for 2x30sec, then roll up to standing position.