

## FLEXIBILITY

**FLEXIBILITY** describes the range of motion in your body joints.

**JOINTS** are formed when two bones come together. The main body joints include the neck, shoulders, elbows, waist, hips, knees and ankles.

**CARTILAGE** acts as a cushion between bones. **LIGAMENTS** and **MUSCLES** bind and stabilize body joints.

**LIGAMENTS** are tough fibers that hold the joint in alignment. Ligament fibers are not very elastic, and overstretching them damages the joint stability.

**MUSCLES** are elastic fibers. Gradually stretching them improves joint flexibility.

### THE MAIN PRINCIPLE OF FLEXIBILITY STRETCHING IS ***PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD***

**TO IMPROVE FLEXIBILITY THE MUSCLES MUST BE STRETCHED GRADUALLY BEYOND THEIR NORMAL RANGE**

Planning a stretching program:

- Include exercises for the entire body. Concentrate on the neck, shoulders, lower back, groin and hamstring muscles.
- Learn to stretch within your personal limits, without straining. Don't compare yourself with others. Remember, everyone is different and stretching is not a contest.
- Hold a mild stretching position for 20-30 seconds. **DON'T OVERSTRETCH!**

There are two types of stretching:

**ACTIVE STRETCHING** uses jerking, bobbing, or bouncing movements.

**PASSIVE STRETCHING** puts the muscles in a mild stretch and holds that position for 20-30 seconds.

**ACTIVE STRETCHING OFTEN CAUSES MUSCLE SORENESS WITH ITS BOUNCING AND JERKING.**

**PASSIVE STRETCHING IS SAFER BECAUSE IT PUTS LESS STRAIN ON THE MUSCLE.**

**YOU CONTROL THE MUSCLE OVERLOAD WITH PASSIVE STRETCHING.**