Heather Smith
07967 995416
heather@fitbiztraining.co.uk

Stretching - Better Than Advertised!

Stretching. A pointless time consumer? A nice 'add on' to your workout if you have time? Or any crucial to reaching your target?

I know most people fall into the second category and stretch after a workout either out of habit or because someone told them stretching is important. I also know a fair few people who don't stretch at all as they feel their 'main' workout is much more important. The truth is that stretching is so important that it deserves a regular place in your workout schedule. I always start a program I'm writing for a client with some mobility work and end it with some stretching. Two lots of stretching in one workout. It must be good stuff!

I'm writing to suggest building some stretching into your daily routine. Why? Well, if you do it every day as a 'stand-alone' thing, you're more likely to do it every day. If you only have to stretch once a week, it's easier to put it off. Likewise, if you only stretch at the end of a workout, it's so easy to run out of time and not bother. This said, if you're doing 3-4 workouts a week and always stretch afterwards, you will be making a positive difference.

The frequency will help to correct your posture, which means less aches and pains and a more flexible body. A pain free body which moves easily is created with mobility at least as much as it is with strength and fitness. If you have any poor movement patterns (I've never met anyone who doesn't, myself included), stretching the right bits every day (alongside increasing strength in the right areas) will reduce them, whereas stretching just once or twice a week allows time for your muscles to tighten up between stretches, which might mean it takes a long time to make any real progress.

It's also a great way to carve some time into your life for exercise without it being a difficult / daunting task to start, which you can then build on and make into a great routine. Stretching might be a bit sore or tight, but it's way more inviting than running round the block! Well, to me at least.

Now, I'm not talking yoga here, although you might notice a lot of the benefits I'm mentioning are similar. I'm just talking about your standard stretches which you learn in most workout classes. Five minutes, and you're done.

Personally, I like to stretch every morning - after breakfast, Clementine and I trot into the garden, I spend 5 minutes stretching while she gives the dog some biscuits, climbs on me and gets her first outfit of the day wet in the paddling pool.

While it's not crucial to stretch in the morning, I find it a perfect time of day because:

Focus, time to think about the day ahead and what you want to achieve. Mine always seems to start with finding a dry outfit for the child.
Apparently if you stretch in the morning, you're more likely to exercise later in the day. I'm not convinced there's any real psychology here, I'm sure it's just that people who focus on their health and do something first thing are more likely to be thinking about their health later in the day as well, just because they're that kind of person. If you want to be that kind of person, be that kind of person!
Let's be honest, if you do something good for yourself first thing, you feel smug for the rest of the day!

If you're thinking you just don't have time to stretch every day, how about making a commitment to do it in the evening when you'd otherwise be sitting on the sofa every night for the next week, and see how you feel?
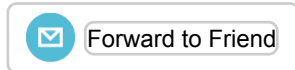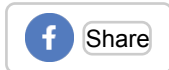
If you'd like to get started, I have a short video of stretches to get you going and I'm very happy to send it to you, please just ask.

Until next time, enjoy staying healthy!
Best wishes,

Heather

Share | Tweet | Forward to Friend