



### Importance of Cool Down

With the frigid temperatures we all know the importance of an effective warm up, however many of us neglect the cool down portion of our training. Whether you're inside or out, the cool down may be more important than you think.

The day after a hard workout do you ever feel like a truck hit you? It may have been your cool down, or the lack of one. It can also be dangerous to avoid a cool down, creating dizziness, nausea or fainting. Here is what I refer to as the 3 R's of Recovery.

1. **Return** heart rate and blood pressure to normal
2. **Relax** and Stretch
3. **Replenish** Fluids

**Returning** heart rate and blood pressure to normal allows the body's blood to be pumped through the heart at a consistent rate. This helps to avoid any pooling of blood in areas of the body, which could cause dizziness or fainting. Just as important, the consistent flow of blood replenishes the body's nutrients, which determines how you feel the next day. So be sure to take the treadmill intensity gradually down for 3-5 minutes after your sweat session.

**Relaxing** and Stretching is the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of your cool down. It is here that the muscles have the most blood flow. By stretching you get oxygen to the area and eliminate any toxins that may have built up during your workout. Begin with a few standing stretches and then work your way to the floor. Stretch each major muscle group on each side, 1 time for 20 seconds.

#### Standing:

- Hip Flexor Stretch
- Quad Stretch
- Hamstring Stretch
- IT Band Stretch

-Calf Stretch

-Single Arm Pectoralis Stretch

**Seated:**

-Piriformis Stretch

-Thoracic Rotation Stretch

Now it's time to run and hit the showers right? Wrong. Don't forget the final phase of your cool down, **replenish!** Even though you may have sipped water through your workout, it's important to keep drinking while you're taking down the heart rate, during the stretching portion and after you leave the gym. This determines how we feel the next day and also how quickly we recover. Whether you're exercising to have more energy or training for a triathlon, recovery is important for your continued success!

To see videos of how to correctly perform the exercises listed above, please visit our website at [www.redefineathletes.com](http://www.redefineathletes.com).

Jennifer Pautz, MHR, ATC/L

Director of Sports Performance

Athletic & Rehabilitation Center