

Stretching and increasing flexibility

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Every girl wants to learn not just dance but dance beautifully, graceful and aesthetically pleasing. And everybody who ever have to study ballet, dance, gymnastics know that stretching is very important. Because with a good stretching is much easier to perform all the movements connected with the raising of the legs. Not everyone is easy to get good results in stretching for a short period of time, because each has different degree of flexibility from nature. You need to make a lot of effort in order for your muscles are supple and stretched. I suggest you set of exercises that will help better to stretch and become more flexible.

I did rhythmic gymnastics for a long period of my life and and I know about stretching is not by hearsay. I don't have flexibility from nature, because of that I had to put much more effort than girls who were doing gymnastic with me. Many people think: "I just stretch a couple of times and i will have a super stretching". But it's not true! You have to stretching every day not less than a hour! Now I'm coaching children by myself and my experience helps me to teach them how to stretch.

I want offer you a set of exercises which help you to get better stretching and flexibility, this, in turn, will help to achieve better results in dancing and gymnastics.

So, let's talk about warm-up. Structure of our muscles is similar to rubber and how do you think under which condition a rubber will be ripped ? when it's hot or cold ? The answer is obvious! As a rubber it's much more easier to injure our muscles when they are not heated enough. By adding stretching exercises to training schedule you will greatly improve your flexibility and will allow your muscles to grow up. But remember, you have to make warm-up before your stretching exercises and only then you can start to stretch. You should start with easy exercises and go to more hardest ones. Also you should balance load in the right way. The main rule here is to do just as much as you can at this moment. That means you can reduce exercise time if it's hard to do a full time for you.

Exercises with bar

Exercise #1

Initial position: facing the bar, the brushes are on a stick, raise your right leg aside and put on the bar, while the toe looks up. Slide along the bar for stretching the right leg.

Make same for the left leg.

Exercise #2 Stretching for a right split

Initial position: the left leg rests on the bar, the right leg is stretched forward. Herewith back is straight, toes are stretched ahead, knees do not bend. Sitting that not less than 2 minutes.

Exercise #3 Stretching for a straddle split

Initial position: the right foot is on the bar, the left foot is on the floor and straight, hands are in front. Make stretching not less than 2 minutes.

Exercise #4

Initial position: right leg is on the bar, the left is on the floor and straight, hands are in the third position. Tilt corps on the right leg, than fix the position a few seconds, and returns to its original position.

Exercise #5

Initial position: stand right side to the bar, put the right foot on the bar, it must be straight, the left foot is turned outside, hands are in the third position. Perform demi-plie (squats on the right foot) and then return back. Run on the right and the left foot to 8 times.

Exercise #6

Initial position: stand right side to the bar, put the right foot on the bar, it must be straight, the left foot is turned outside, hands are in the third position. Perform demi-plie (squats on the right foot) and then return back. Run on the right and the left foot to 8 times.

Exercise #7

Initial position: stand back to the bar, put one foot under the bar, it must be straight, second foot is turned outside, hands are in the third position. Perform demi-plie and then return back. Run on the right and the left foot to 8 times.

Exercise #8 "Flag" on the right foot

Initial position: stand right side to the bar, take the right foot's heel into the right hand. Align foot to the side and pull it to yourself. Do exercise for not less than 2 minutes.

Exercise #9 “Flag” on the left foot

Initial position: stand left side to the bar, take the left foot’s heel into the left hand. Align foot to the side and pull it to yourself. Do exercise for not less than 2 minutes.

Exercise #10

Initial position: stand back to the bar, take the right foot into the left hand and align it in front of you. Pull the foot to yourself. Then move down your foot and release your it at max distance you’ve pulled, hold it for 15 secs in this position.

Exercise #11

Initial position: stand back to the bar, take the left foot into the right hand and align it in front of you. Pull the foot to yourself. Then move down your foot and release your it at max distance you’ve pulled, hold it for 15 secs in this position.

Exercises with chair

Exercise #11

Initial position: stand back to the bar, take the left foot into the right hand and align it in front of you. Pull the foot to yourself. Then move down your foot and release your it at max distance you’ve pulled, hold it for 15 secs in this position.

Exercise #12 Stretching between two chairs for a right split

Initial position: stand face to the chair, put the right foot on the chair (catch chair only by heel), the left foot is in support on another chair (see pics), hold hands on the bar or on the chairs. Perform stretching for 5 minutes.

Exercise #13 Stretching between two chairs for a left split

Initial position: stand face to a chair, put the left foot on the chair (catch chair only by heel), the right foot is in support on another chair, hold hands on the bar or on chairs. Perform stretching for 5 minutes.

Exercise #14 Stretching between two chairs for a straddle split

Initial position: stand face to the bar, put the left foot on one chair the right one on another. Perform stretching for 5 minutes.

Exercise #15

Initial position: put heel of the right foot on chair at front of you, put both hands on a chair. Perform stretching for a minute. Repeats it for the left foot.

Exercise #16

Initial position: stand left side to a chair, put the left foot on it. Perform sliding in stretching for the straddle split. Hold hands at floor in front of you. Repeat it for the right foot.

All exercises were mentioned before are complicated for newbies. So if you have never been stretching before you should perform these exercises very carefully.

Active stretching

So, we have done a good job and improved our flexibility with passive stretching exercises. But now we need to consolidate the achieved results. Here to help us come a set of exercises for active stretching.

Exercise #17 Holding on the left leg

Initial position: stand left side to the bar and put the left hand on the bar, the right hand is aside, feet are in the third position. Lift your left leg in front of you and hold it for 15 secs, then move leg aside while keep holding it and fix it for 15 secs too, finally move it in front of you again and pull down. Repeat two times.

Exercise #18 Holding on the right leg

Initial position: stand right side to the bar and put the right hand on the bar, the left hand is aside, feet are in the third position. Lift your right leg in front of you and hold it for 15 secs, then move leg aside while keep holding it and fix it for 15 secs too, finally move it in front of you again and pull down. Repeat two times.

Exercise #19 Grand battement ahead

Initial position: stand back to the bar, put your hands aside on the bar. Vigorously do swinging the left leg ahead then do the same on the right leg. 10 times per leg.

Exercise #20 Grand battement backward

Initial position: stand face to the bar, put your hands aside on the bar. Vigorously do swinging the left leg backward then do the same on the right leg. 10 times per leg.

Exercise #21

Initial position: stand face to the bar, hands are ahead on the bar. Lift your the left leg backward hold it for 15 secs and then pull it down. The same is for the right leg. Repeat two times per leg.

Exercise #22

Initial position: stand the left side to the bar, put the left hand on the bar, the right hand is aside, feet are in the third position. Lift your right leg ahead as high as possible then pull it down through the first position and slide it backward while squatting on the left leg, hold for a while and return to initial position. Repeat 10 times.

Exercise #23

Initial position: stand the right side to the bar, put the right hand on the bar, the left hand is aside, feet are in the third position. Lift your left leg ahead as high as possible then pull it down through the first position and slide it backward while squatting on the right leg, hold for a while and return it to initial position. Repeat 10 times.

While doing exercises #22-23 you should control your heel while your leg is back. The foot should lie on the floor by inside part of it.

Exercises on the floor without support

Exercise #24 Lunge on the right leg

Initial position: stand at the floor, the hands are third position. Do long step on the right foot. The left leg is straight in the back. Hold this position for a while then move back. Repeat 5 times.

Exercise #25 Lunge on the left leg

Initial position: stand at the floor, the hands are third position. Do long step on the left foot. The right leg is straight in the back. Hold this position for a while then move back. Repeat 5 times.

Exercise #26

Initial position: sit at the floor, bend your legs in knees, take your feet in hands. Stretch your legs ahead while keep holding your feet in hands, hold this position for a while and return in initial position.

Exercise #27

Initial position: sit at the floor, the legs are expanded ahead, the back is straight, hands divorced in hand. Take your the left heel by the right hand and pull it to you as clothe, fix it for a while and return back, herewith your knees should not be bent.

Exercise #28

Initial position: sit at the floor, the legs are expanded ahead, the back is straight, hands divorced in hand. Take your the right heel by the left hand and pull it to you as clothe, fix it for a while and return back, herewith your knees should not be bent.

Exercise #29

Initial position: sit at the floor, divorce your legs in straddle split, the hands are in the third position. Put your body down on the floor, stretch your hands ahead as far as possible while trying to put your stomach on the floor.

Exercise #30

Initial position: sit at the floor in straddle split. Put your body on the left leg and hold it for a while. Repeat it for the right leg.

Exercise #31

Initial position: lie on the back at the floor, both legs are stretched up, heels are together. Divorce your legs gradually in the straddle split then move them back. Repeat 10 times. Hold your legs split and press them to the floor at the last time.

Exercise #32

Initial position: lie on the back at the floor, make your legs straight, hands divorced in hand. Pull your body up through the straddle split without hands, hold your body in this position for a while then put your body down to the floor on stomach and get your legs together without hands too.

Exercises in pairs

Exercise #33

Initial position: lie on the back at the floor, get hands together. Stretch your left leg up, your partner take it and pull it toward the floor, herewith knees should be not bent. Perform pulling very carefully, when the girl feels pain should stop pulling and hold it for a while, then resume pulling very carefully, do not overdo it.

Exercise #34

Initial position: lie on the left side at the floor, the legs are straight, the right hand is stretched and straight. Stretch your left leg up, your partner take it and pull on the shoulder. The same is for the right leg. Repeat it for the right leg.

Exercise #35

Initial position: lie on the back at the floor, get legs together. Do swings in front (grand battement) on the right leg then on the left one. Repeats 10 time per leg.

Exercise #36 Clippers

Initial position: lie on the back at the floor, the legs are raised up, hands lie along the body. Do split on the right leg then on the left hand sharply. The legs should not be bent in knees and they should not touch the floor.

Exercise #37

Initial position: lie on the back at the floor. Throw the legs over the head, herewith they should be straight and touch the floor by toes.

Exercise #38

Initial position: one girl is standing on her knees, another one is standing behind first. The second girl takes the left leg of the first girl and pull it in front of her, then repeat on the right leg.

Exercise #39

Initial position: sit on the floor, get legs together. Do twelve springy forward bends.

Exercise #40

Sit on the floor, bend your right knee and pull it to your chest then twist it to the left. Hold this position for a while. Repeat it for the left leg.

Exercise #41 For muscles of hands

Initial position: sit down on your knees, your back should be straight. Bend the right hand in elbow. Bring your left hand to the right and stretch it as much as possible while supporting it by the right hand. Hold this position for a while then repeat it for the right hand. Repeat exercise 7-10 times.

Exercise #42 Stretching the calf muscles

Lean forward, so that the angle between the legs and torso was approximately 90 degrees. Relax your legs and then start alternately bend and straighten knee of one leg then another. Repeat 10 times.

Exercise #43 Stretching upper body

Initial position: sit down on the floor, bend your legs in knees, put your arms on the floor slightly behind the hips, fingers are turned back. Slowly start move your palms back until you feel tension in the muscles of hands and chest, then stop moving and hold this position for a while.

Exercise #44

Initial position: lie down on the stomach, divorce your hands and legs in opposite directions. Pull alternately every knee by hand to your chest.

Exercise #45

Initial position: sit down on your knees, take your ankles. bend your back back, hold this position for 30 secs.