

STRETCHING

CAN BOOST
HEART HEALTH

It's well-known that stretching benefits your muscles and tendons. When combined with breathing techniques it's also known to benefit your mind. More recently, it's been discovered that stretching may benefit your cardiovascular system as well. Here are some simple stretches to try for a stronger heart and better vascular function.

Stretches to Try

Forward Fold

Hang loose and let gravity do the work of stretching your legs' posterior muscles.

Supine Hamstring Stretch

Use a towel to help pull your leg back into your body. You'll feel the stretch in your hamstring and calf muscles.

Prone Quad Stretch

Loop a towel around your foot and gently tug it from over your shoulder. Keep your quad flat to the floor while you stretch.

Breathing for BETTER CIRCULATION

Certain breathing exercises have been shown to help with circulation in general as well. Here are a few you can try.

Deep Diaphragm Breaths

Lay on the floor with a pillow under your knees. Place one hand over your chest and the other on your upper abdomen. Take several deep, slow breaths through your nostrils, feeling the breath inflate your lower stomach each time.

Alternate Closed Nostril Breathing

Sit or stand upright and gently pinch one nostril closed with your hand. Inhale deeply, then release your nostril, pinch the other nostril and exhale. Repeat several times, alternating sides with each breath.

Counted Segmented Breaths

In any comfortable position, breathe in deeply for five seconds, hold the breath for five seconds, and exhale for five seconds. Then, with your lungs empty, wait another five seconds before repeating the cycle. Experiment with different lengths of breath. The focus on the counting helps destress the body and lower blood pressure.

