

When someone walks into a room with huge muscles and hunched back, what do you notice there awesome physique or poor posture?

The posture! Don't be that dumbass that is walking with his "invisible lats" that are pushing his arms out so wide that he can barely walk through the doorway. Or the guy whose back is sooo hunched that he looks more like Quasimodo than a bodybuilder.

I will illustrate some of my favorite stretching techniques that will leave you looking and feeling better than ever before. However, there are a few basic terms that I want you to comprehend that will really allow you to understand how your body works.

The first and most important term that we will address is *proprioception*. This is essentially your body's mind muscle connection. I use the analogy of cell phone service to help explain this term to clients. For example, you may have full service in your arms but only 1 or 2 bars in the center of your back or in your glutes. The point is that without flexibility training there is no way you will be able to have full service in all of you muscles.

"Proprioception: The ability to sense stimuli arising within the body. Even if you are blindfolded, you know through proprioception if your arm is above your head or hanging by your side. The word "proprioception" was coined in 1906 by the English neurophysiologist Charles Sherrington who received the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine in 1932 for research on the function of the neuron and study of reflex action."

This is what often times separates amateur from pro athletes. The better in tune you are with your body and inner self, the more success you will have in your sport. Use these techniques to master your physique! Even try doing some exercises with your eyes closed; you might be amazed at the benefit!

FASCIA STRETCHING TECHNIQUES

Next you must understand fascia stretching techniques. What is fascia? Fascia is the tissue in which your muscle fibers are contained. Almost like a honeycomb structure that contains muscle fibers. Stretching your fascia is crucial for big full looking muscles. This stretch will also allow the muscle to get the nutrients and minerals that it needs to grow.

Before you begin this program the first thing you should do is go to your local sporting goods store and purchase a foam roller, the one that is approx three feet long if possible, and as hard as possible. This foam roller will become a part of your daily routine, and you will thank me forever.

Self-Myofascial Release with Foam Roller:

Calves:

Begin by working your calf. You will sit on the ground and place you Achilles on the foam roller. You will then cross your other ankle on top of that foot. You place your palms flat onto the ground and press yourself upwards until your glutes lift off of the ground. You will start at your calf and roll out each part of the muscle all the way up to your knee, pausing for one minute on each spot that is tight. You will then go back and stay on the most painful spot on the way

back down to insure that you got as much lactic acid as possible out of the muscle. Think of each sore spot as an ice cube that is melting away. This is essential if you are a hardgainer with small calves!!!

Do your research and learn how to work every muscle group possible with the foam roller, a dvd should be included or you can find it online. Think of foam rolling as something is part of relaxation and that you like to do, rather than something that is work. Have fun with it and see some amazing results!

EXTREME & Weighted Fascia Stretching Techniques

- **DB Chest stretch:** Grab 10 lb DB and lay back on the bench. Raise your feet into the air so that your legs are at a 90 degree angle, keeping your lower back firmly pressed against the bench. Hold for 60-90 sec.
- **Hanging Lat Stretch:** Grab onto the pull up bar with as wide of grip as possible. Hang with bodyweight until you can reach 90 sec. From here you will begin to add weight.
- **Shoulder Stretch:** Set the smith machine so that the bar is at a medium height. With your back to the bar, reach your arms back, so that your thumbs are closer to your body than your pinky, and grab the bar palms facing up, slowly kneel to the ground and hold for 1 minute.
- **Bicep Stretch:** Repeat the same move as before, however this time you will have your pinky closer to your body and your palms facing down.
- **Triceps Stretch:** Set the bar at a medium height, facing the bar place your hands a few inches apart palms facing down. Next, let your body come under the bar so that the bar is just about touching the back of your neck. You will feel an extreme stretch in your triceps and it will also cause you to stabilize with your core. This will be the best triceps stretch you have ever had in your life.
- **Quadriceps Stretch:** Stretch your quads so that you can build that full look. Balance on the balls of your toes and hold onto something for balance and lean as far back as possible on the sissy squat. Hold this bottom position for 1 minute. To be honest I can never nail this one just right, but some of my training partners who do, pretty much can't even stand up after the minute.

MY FAVORITE STRETCHING ROUTINE: 10 MINUTES TO SELF HEALING

This routine was taught to me by a martial arts master, and has been around for thousands of years with the purpose of self healing. Begin by imagining that you are somewhere you are incredibly relaxed, and calm. Take the deepest breaths possible, drawing all of the air into your lower abdomen. Let all of your stress and worries go. Stand as tall as possible both feet shoulder width apart facing straight ahead and perform the following stretches.

Rotator Cuff- Raise both of your arms straight ahead so that they are parallel to the floor. Similar to a front delt raise, from here you will make a fist as if you were punching. Then press both arms forward one slightly farther ahead than the other. You will then make 20 slow circular motions forward, around the stationary hand that is slightly farther back. You will then switch hands and repeat. You will then do 20 circular motions in reverse on each arm. From here you will press both arms as far as possible, and then you will press one just a little farther for 30 secs. Repeat on the other side, you should feel this pulling on your spine in the center of your back the whole time as well.

- **Lower Back-** Hold each elbow with the opposite hand. Then from a standing position, bend over and hand your elbows as close to the ground as possible. Hold for 1 minute.
- **Standing Hamstring #1-** For the first standing hamstring stretch place your left hand behind your back right above your hip bone. You will then touch your right hand to your right toe. You will feel your hamstring and lower back begin to loosen up. Hold for 1 minute then repeat on the other side.
- **Standing Hamstring #2-** Find a bench that is about knee height and place the center of your foot on the bench. You will then lock out the knee that is on the bench and lean as far forward as possible, Interlock your fingers and place them on your upper thigh, slowly push them down toward the knee as you continue to stretch for 1 minute. Really push yourself to stretch as much as possible here! Repeat on the other side.
- **Seated Hamstring Stretch-** Sit on the bench and place one heel on the ground so that your toe is facing the sky. Interlock your fingers and place them on your upper thigh, slowly push them down toward the knee as you continue to stretch. Hold for 1 minute repeat on the opposite side.
- **Hurdler's Stretch-** Sit on the floor and place one leg flat onto the ground so that your knee and toe are pointing towards the sky. Bend your other knee so that your foot is flush with your inner thigh. Then, reach both arms towards the outside of the foot. This stretch will really get you ready for the final move. Keep stretching as far as possible while taking long deep breaths.
- **THE FINAL MOVE-** Sit on the ground with your legs together toes pointed towards the sky. Next, you will place your elbows on the ground so that your forearm is flush with the floor. From here you will bend over until your head is in between your knees and you will hold yourself there for 1 minute. The first time you do this you will probably be shaking and in a lot of pain. In a short period of time you will master this technique and repeat it on a daily basis. This is the indication of the progress that you have made.