

Rock Monkey Level 3

Week 4 - Flexibility

If you haven't already watched it then check out this weeks accompanying video [here](#)

Let's look at flexibility this week. Being super flexible can be a great tool to have in our climbing toolkit, it can help us get our feet on those out of the way footholds and enable us to put more weight through our feet. If you're a shorter climber then we think it's even more important to be flexible, remember when you can't reach that next hold with your hand but you can get a foot really high onto the next hold and manage to reach up? That's where being flexible comes into play. It also helps stay injury free and helps stop our muscles from being really tight and sore after we train or climb. Generally, to increase your flexibility you should stretch your muscles.

Remember dynamic stretches to warm up and static stretching for after your exercise, for flexibility and to stop tight muscles the day after. **Never** stretch from cold, always warm up with a quick jog, or maybe a hot bath or a shower. You can always stretch after your climbing or training session as you should already be warm.

For the upper body we want to focus on preventing injury and reducing tight muscles (you know when you wake up after a lot of exercise the day before and your muscles hurt?? Well it only gets worse as you grow older - ask your parents!). Also we can look at mobility in our upper body, which is the range of movement we can put our muscles through. This will stop you from getting hunched over shoulders and enable a wider range of motion for your arms.

Our lower body is where we can really maximise our flexibility. Hip flexibility is great for 'frogging moves' (where you open your hips to get them close to the wall), high steps and rock overs.

Getting flexible upper leg muscles (hamstrings) is helpful for, drop knees, heel and toe hooks. Your lower leg (calves) flexibility is great for your footwork, smearing, edging and pushing with your toes.

For this week's homework you will need:

- A stretch band or broom stick (for mobility session)
- Some space to do your stretches and ideally a yoga mat to make the floor a little more comfortable.
- A door frame or something you can push against to stretch.
- A timer (you can always count to 30 if you don't have anything to time with) - I found this one with a quick google search - <https://www.tabatatimer.com/> (it's a little aggressive though!)

Please ask your **parents permission** and be careful when stretching, the stretch shouldn't be painful. Just go far enough you can feel the stretch and keep it at the level. Remember to warm up before stretching.

Challenge 1 - Yoga

Yoga is a great way to stay flexible, it also helps with breathing which is really useful if you get scared when you're climbing on a route and need to relax. There are lots of different yoga routines you can do but I'm going suggest following along to this one which is designed for climber to use for a warm up - [Here](#)

Challenge 2 - Shoulder mobility session

Follow this [video](#) for a shoulder mobility stretching session. For each stretch hold it for 30 seconds. Repeat the stretch 3 times with a 10 second rest time in between.

Stretch one - Broomstick behind head

Hold the broom at each end, put your hands above your head. Push the broom up first, then rotate your shoulders back so your hands are behind your head. Hold for 30 seconds.

Stretch two - Chest opener

Put your arm out straight to your side, turn your palm forward and bend your elbow 90 degrees. From this position place your palm against the door frame and push your body forwards.

Stretch three - Bicep stretch

Sit on the ground with your knees bent and place your hands behind you with your palms facing away from you. From this position move your legs and bum away from your hands until you can start to feel a stretch, then stretch your fingers a little to ensure they are flat and hold that stretch.

Challenge 3 - Lower leg stretches

Follow this [video](#) for a lower leg flexibility session. For each stretch hold it for 30 seconds. Repeat the stretch 3 times with a 10 second rest time in between.

Stretch one - Box Split

Stand with your toes facing forward, now turn them slightly inwards. Move your feet out as far away as possible, engage your core and relax your hips into the stretch.

Stretch two - Toe Touches

Stand with your feet and knees together, bend over with your hands towards your feet but don't stretch down yet. Bend your knees to allow your hands to touch your feet, slowly straighten your legs until you can feel the stretch in your hamstrings and hold for 30 seconds.

Stretch three - Butterfly

Sit down with your back against a supportive surface, a wall for example. Straighten your back, tucking your hips to the wall. Place the soles of your feet together and push your knees towards the ground, hold when you feel the stretch.

Film or take pictures the challenges and email them to us rockmonkeys@redpointbristol.co.uk or, if you use Instagram, then upload your videos and tag @redpointbristol

Week 4 - Exercise Challenge

For this week's exercise challenge you need to find out what 'level' of pull up you can complete. Ask a parent or adult to watch you and be strict! Don't try the next level until you are perfect on the previous one. Make sure you keep good form!

Good Luck!