

Exercise Therapy

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Ballistic Stretching

Definition

A rapid, forceful intermittent stretch, a high-speed and high-intensity stretch is commonly called ballistic stretching.

Ballistic stretching is a stretching technique that uses rapid, bouncing movements to generate momentum and move a body segment beyond its usual range of motion (ROM), with the aim of lengthening shortened muscles and other soft tissues.

Uses

Although ballistic stretching can improve flexibility, it may produce greater tissue stress and post-exercise muscle soreness than static stretching, particularly when performed with excessive force or inadequate control.

Precautions

Ballistic stretching may be appropriate for selected young, healthy individuals participating in structured conditioning or sports programmes. However, it is generally not the first choice for elderly or sedentary individuals and patients with musculoskeletal disorders or chronic contractures. Dense connective tissue associated with chronic contractures may respond poorly to high-intensity, short-duration stretching, which can increase the risk of tissue injury. In these cases, slow, controlled, sustained stretching is generally preferred.

References

1. Kisner, C., Colby, L. A., & Borstad, J. (2017). Therapeutic Exercise: Foundations and Techniques (7th ed.). F. A. Davis Company.

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