

## TO STRETCH AND HOW

by Allen Tabé

Stretching is NOT an activity that was meant to be painful; it should be relaxing and very beneficial. Although many people believe that to get the most from their stretching they may be in pain. This is one of the biggest mistakes you can make when stretching. Why? Let me explain.

When the muscles and tendons are stretched to the point of pain, the body employs a defense mechanism called the 'stretch reflex' which is the body's safety measure to prevent serious damage to the muscles and tendons. The 'stretch reflex' protects the muscles and tendons by contracting them. So to avoid the 'stretch reflex', and avoid pain, only stretch to the point where you can feel tension in your muscles. This way, you'll avoid injury and get the maximum benefits from your stretching. Try to hold the stretch for around 30 seconds or longer. And stretch frequently to keep yourself flexible.

Remember to warm up your muscles before stretching. A few minutes of walking is an easy way to do this.