

Edward D. Williams, D.P.M.* Gregg Congdon, D.P.M.

*Diplomate, American Board of Podiatric Surgery Certified in Foot & Ankle Surgery

*Diplomate, American Board of Podiatric Orthopedics

*Board Certified American Board of Disability Analysts

Dear Runner,

The most important function of these exercises is injury prevention. They are designed for you to neutralize the unbalance and inflexible situation running produces.

Stretching should be done BEFORE running to gradually prepare your muscle groups, your joints, your whole body for the increased physiological demands of running.

Stretching should be done AFTER running to ease the tension in your body and to relax after a strenuous workout.

Before you begin your stretch program, be aware of these important points:

- a. When stretching, your breathing should be slow, rhythmical and under control. If the position of a stretch inhibits your natural breathing pattern, then you are not in a relaxed position. Just ease up on the stretch to where natural, slow, rhythmical breathing is possible
- b. There is no place for straining in stretching. Straining is very negative. Learn to stretch without straining. It takes time to loosen up tight muscles.
- c. DO NOT BOUNCE WHEN YOU STRETCH. When a muscle is jerked into extension, it responds by pulling back and shortening itself again. Therefore, you are in essence, working against your own body.

