

Trapeze School New York TM Beginner Flyer Materials

Warm up exercises

Often, the best flyers are the people with the best flying habits. We encourage regular pre-class warm-ups as a great way to improve performance and mobility while flying. It is also very important to prepare your body for the forces that flying will put upon it. Especially if you plan to fly often.

Here is an easy list of stretches and exercises you can do arriving just 15 minutes before class. Please check with your physician if there is any question about your ability to perform these exercises or participate in our classes.

1. **Jumping jacks-** A quick 50 jumps is a great way to build a bit of heat in your body before trying to stretch. The muscles need to be warm and full of fresh blood in order to work well. Always strive to get a little sweat going before you begin to stretch.
2. **Crunch/sit-ups-** Doing a few sets of 20 crunches between stretching exercises is a great way to keep the heat in your body. Doing the sit-up properly is very important. Start on a mat or rug lying on your back. Bend your knees and place your feet flat on the ground with your knees together. Put your hands by your ears with your elbows pointing out away from your body. DO NOT lock your hands behind your head. Carefully lift your chest toward your knees, but only raise off the ground about 10 inches. It is not necessary to come all the way up. Rather, simply engage your stomach muscles while working not to strain your neck. If you experience any pain, stop immediately and ask an instructor for assistance.
3. **Push Ups-** A few set of 10 push ups will get your arm and back muscles warm. If you are unable to do sets of 10, don't worry. Sets of 4 work just as well. The most important thing to remember while doing pushups is to keep a straight line running from the top of your spine to your heels. When you are at the top of your pushup your eyes are looking directly at the ground. Not in front of you and not down toward your tummy. As you lower, keep your back in line. If it begins to bend, stop and try getting good and straight again. Lower down only to a point where your nose is about three inches from the ground and then push back up. Add difficulty by slowing the movement down. Be committed to excellent form.
4. **Shoulder Rolls-** Rolling your shoulders is a simple thing you can do that brings the blood right where you most need it. Roll both shoulders forward 20 times, then backward 20 times and repeat until you have done both directions at least twice.
5. **Forward Bend-** Don't think that you have to be able to touch your toes to get a good stretch out of this one. In fact, your posture plays a much bigger role in

getting results from this stretch than how far over you bend. Start by sitting with your legs together straight out in front of you. Flex your feet and try to get your thighs and calves flat on the ground. While holding your legs flat to the ground, sit up straight as if there was a string pulling you up from the very top of your head.

Place your hands on the ground to your sides wherever they fall comfortably. Do not grab your legs or feet to pull yourself down. Leading with your chest, begin to crawl your hands forward. Keep a good posture, legs flat on the ground, head up, chest leaning forward, even if it means you only move a few inches. You should feel the stretch in your legs, butt and lower back. There should be no pain. Move slowly and remember to breath. It takes about two minutes for your muscles to accomplish a retainable stretch, so take you time. Do not bounce. Simply find the stretch and hold it.

- 6. *Standing shoulder stretch-*** Start by standing with right shoulder and foot touching a wall. You should be looking down the length of the wall with your body facing the same direction as your eyes. Place your left arm straight out and behind you with your palm flat against the wall. You may need to move away from the wall a bit if your shoulders are very tight. Be sure that your arm is at a right angle to your body with your hand neither above nor below the height of your shoulder. Stand up straight as if someone were pulling you up on a string from the top of your head. You may already feel quite a stretch in your shoulder. If there is any pain, stop and give yourself a bit more room from the wall.

Pull your shoulder blades together on your back and breathe deeply into your chest. This will deepen the stretch. Engage the muscles of your right arm so that they hug up onto the bone. Keep you body straight, shoulder blades together and right arm engaged then (if you are not in pain) turn with miniscule movement away from the wall. Once you have found your edge (the place where you are stretching, but not in pain) hold there for about 2 minutes. This will give your muscles time to retain the stretch you are giving them.

Over time, doing these warm ups and stretches correctly and consistently, you will notice a real difference in the strength and flexibility of your body. Seeing positive results will encourage you to give more healthy attention to your body and consequently improve the overall quality of your life. Be sure to ask for insight from your instructors on how to best utilize and perform these exercises.