How to Run a 10-Minute Cooldown Stretch Routine After Every

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Wind your heart rate down for three to five minutes, then hold nine stretches for 20 to 30 seconds each — a calm, repeatable ten-minute cooldown for any training day.

Things you will need

- Sturdy step or stair edge with a handrail
- Open doorway with a clear frame
- Wall or chair for balance in standing stretches
- Yoga mat or folded cushion for kneeling
- Strap, belt, or towel for quad and hamstring reach
- High-density foam roller, 12 to 18 inches long
- Phone interval timer set to 20-30 seconds
- Water bottle, 500 to 750 milliliters
- Electrolyte tabs for long or sweaty sessions
- Fast post-workout protein: milk, yogurt, or a shake with 20 grams
- Banana or cereal bar for the carbohydrate half of refueling
- Bathroom scale for pre- and post-training weight checks
- Towel to sit on so floor stretches stay comfortable
- Small notebook or notes app for the four-week log

Set the Rules Before You Stretch

1. **End With Three to Five Easy Minutes**
   Think of the cooldown as the reverse of your warm-up.
2. **Hold Each Stretch for 20 to 30 Seconds**
   The dose that changes flexibility is consistency, not length.
3. **Breathe Slowly and Never Bounce**
   Ease into each position, breathe, and stop adding range once you feel mild tension.
4. **Stretch After Training, Not on Cold Muscles**
   Save the long holds for after training, when muscles are warm and blood flow is high.
5. **Skip Stretching After Acute Strain or Sharp Pain**
   Stretching is for healthy tissue, not injured tissue.

Part One: Calves, Hamstrings, Quads, Hips

6. **Lengthen Calves on a Step Edge**
   Start low.
7. **Stretch Hamstrings Seated With a Flat Back**
   Sit on the floor with one leg extended and the other knee bent, that foot out to the side.
8. **Open Quads Standing or From Your Side**
   Stand beside a wall or chair and rest a hand on it.

9. Release Hip Flexors in a Half-Kneeling Lunge

Kneel on a folded mat or cushion with one foot forward so the front knee stacks over the ankle at a right angle.

10. Unload Glutes With a Figure-Four Stretch

Lie on your back with both knees bent, then cross one ankle over the opposite knee so the legs form a crossed-fours shape.

Part Two: Adductors, Chest, Lats, Neck

11. Ease Adductors With a Slow Side Lunge

Stand with a wide stance and both toes pointing forward.

12. Open the Chest in a Doorway

Stand in an open doorway.

13. Pull a Lat From an Overhead Grip

Stand tall and reach one arm straight overhead, then lean the whole torso sideways away from it until you feel the ribs and the side of your back lengthen.

14. Settle the Neck and Upper Traps Gently

Sit or stand with a long spine and let one ear drop toward the same-side shoulder.

15. Close With One Slow Breathing Minute

Finish seated, eyes closed or softly lowered.

Adapt It to Your Training and Your Week

16. Scale the Routine for Running Days

On running days, add a second round on the four tissues that carry the mileage: calves in both knee positions, hamstrings, hip flexors, and the figure-four.

17. Scale It for Heavy Lifting Days

After lifting, stretch what you just trained, first.

18. Add Foam Rolling to Safe Contact Points

A firm foam roller is the active option, and it often feels better than passive holds.

19. Rehydrate and Refuel Inside One Hour

Do your stretches while you drink.

20. Put the Cooldown on a Weekly Schedule

Flexibility work pays out on a schedule: at least two to three days a week for maintenance, and daily is better — the US physical activity guidelines echo the same two-plus-days message.

Sources

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Written as a checklist from https://www.howcompass.com/how-to/Run-a-Cooldown-Stretch-Routine. Corrections: https://www.howcompass.com