

Below is a helpful article regarding Fascial Stretch Therapy (scroll down for homework stretches that I can demo with you after your stretch with me).



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By now, you're probably familiar with the hurts-so-good pain of the [foam roller](#). Regularly getting your roll on can ward off injuries and help you perform better at the gym, primarily by keeping your fascia smooth and healthy. Yep, your fascia: the cobweb-like tissue that surrounds all your muscles, bones, joints, and ligaments. On the other hand, hunching over your computer all day, exercising—basically living—can cause fascia to tighten and compress muscles, or form movement-inhibiting adhesions and scar tissue, which lead to injury and chronic pain. Rolling on the reg isn't the only way to give your fascia some TLC, you can also do some stretching.

### **The low down on FST**

Before you stand up to do a quad stretch at your desk, though, know this: Not just any stretch helps you get into and release stiff tissue. "Most static stretches, like the traditional quad stretch, attempt to isolate a single muscle," says Chris Frederick, co-director of the [Stretch to Win Institute](#). That's where Fascial Stretch Therapy (FST), a fascia-targeting technique, comes in.

"We engage the whole myofascial system by targeting the muscles as well as their neighboring joints, ligaments, tendons, and bones."

In an FST session, you hop on a massage table with comfortable stabilizing straps, and a therapist gently pulls and moves your legs, arms, spine, and neck in different ways to stretch the fascia and lubricate your joints. "The therapist uses their body as leverage to create traction and gently moves your limbs in a wave-like motion, which helps calm down the nervous system and releases tension from your joints and muscles, which in turn helps the tissue to release," says Lisa Jankin, a certified Fascial Stretch Therapist at Body Bank Fitness in New City, New York. The constant movement (you never hold the stretch) through multiple planes of motion (up and down, side to side, or in and out) coupled with synchronized breathing is what sets this technique apart from traditional stretching. [You can find a certified FST therapist who can help you get started here.](#)

**MORE:** [5 Major Stretching Mistakes—and How to Fix Them](#)

### **How to Stretch Out Your Fascia at Home**

But if you can't get to a session with a therapist, there are some at-home stretches you can do as pre-hab (or injury prevention) on your own. Do the moves below, from Frederick, for five to 10 minutes a day, spending more times on areas where you feel especially tight.

When you do the exercises is up to you: Doing them immediately before your next workout could definitely help your performance because it extends your range of motion so you'll be able to get deeper into that squat or lunge, for example. Doing them at a slower pace post-workout can help ward off soreness. And doing them before bed (again, at a slower pace) can help you sleep better, says Frederick. Keep repeating each movement until you feel like you've reached your max range of motion, meaning you feel like you can't stretch any further or deeper. "It's fine if that means you do more reps on one side than the other," says Frederick. As you perform the stretches, make sure you're continually moving (you should never hold any of the positions) and breathing (breathe in as you prepare to stretch and out as you stretch). Synchronizing your breath with the movement helps to improve your breathing efficiency, which brings more oxygen to the tissue.



CRYSTAL COONS

### **Glute Stretch**

Sit with your weight on your right glute with your right knee bent and right foot resting on your left knee (your left leg should be bent behind you) (A). Lengthen through your spine as you inhale, then exhale, moving your torso forward and down over your right knee (B). Roll up through your spine to return to the starting position. Then repeat, taking your torso forward over the front of your knee at different angles. This targets different glute fibers. Repeat on the other leg.



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### **Quadratus Lumborum (QL) Stretch**

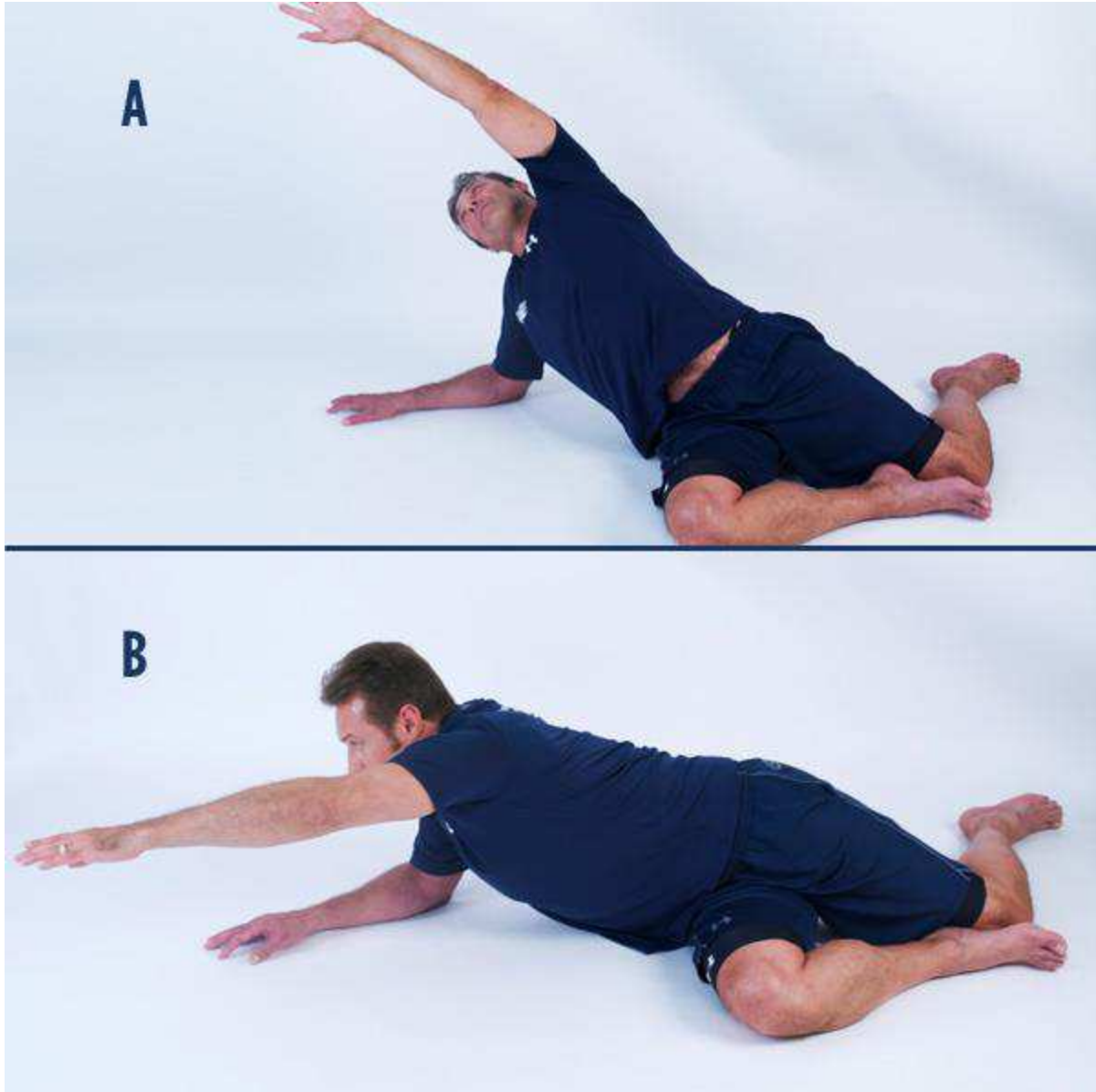
From the glute stretch, walk your hands forward until a slight stretch is felt in your back, hips, and legs. Lean towards your left and inhale. Exhale as you lean into the right hand, slightly bending elbow. Walk your hands slightly farther and repeat. Continue moving your hands farther away with each rep to progress the stretch. Repeat on the other side.



CRYSTAL COONS

### **Hip Flexor Stretch**

From the QL stretch, place your right forearm on the ground and balance on that arm with your full weight. Lean forward slightly onto your hands and inhale (A). Exhale while leaning your torso back, looking up to ceiling(B). Repeat on the other side.



CRYSTAL COONS

### **Lat Stretch**

Moving from the hip flexor stretch, inhale and then reach your left arm up overhead (A). Extend the arm out from the left hip as you reach. Exhale as you rotate chest down towards the floor, reaching arm out in front of you(B). Circle your arm down and back up overhead to repeat. Repeat on the other side.