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Q: My children play a lot of sports. Should they be stretching to prepare for activity?

A: Youthful tissue is more resistant than older tissue to strains and sprains but these types of injuries do occur in children. It is also important to consider that habits formed during youth lay the foundation for adult behavior and from this perspective it is crucial that young people are taught the principles of pre-game preparation and post-game cool down so that they are more likely to enjoy the benefits of being active throughout their lives. Performing drills prior to sports enhances mental alertness and reflex responses and stretching prior to sports exposes the tissues to forces that may be encountered during the sport but do so in a more controlled manner, thus preparing the tissue

without the risk of injury. Stretching after activity is one of the best ways to stimulate lengthening of tissues because the tissues are warm and therefore more pliable. This also "wrings out" muscles which possess irritating chemicals such as lactic acid.



Gerry Ross H.B.Sc. PT, MCPA, FCAMT

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