

Stretching has marvellous health benefits. I have had many moms phone me the day after their class (yes, I teach parents too!), telling me how they had an incredible night's sleep for the first time in ages. Other than the obvious – it feels amazing – there are the following benefits as well:

- Stretching improves the range of motion in your joints – Therefore you will have better balance and coordination, which will help to keep you mobile and less susceptible to falls. I have survived many dangerous falls with minor injuries because of this fact.
- Adding on to the previous point, it also reduces your recovery time e.g. I injured my knee during the holidays whilst snowboarding (minor tendon injury which could have been very serious had I not been so flexible) – and yet you wouldn't even know because it has already recovered.
- It releases toxins that are trapped in your lymph nodes and it improves your metabolism. Who wouldn't like a healthier body?
- It relieves stress – which, as mentioned, results in a better night's sleep.
- It increases the power and elasticity of your muscles – thus improving your performance in any physical activity.
- It improves circulation by increasing blood flow to your muscles – which again ties in with speedy injury recovery.
- It improves your posture which in turn helps with the following:
  - Prevents backache and muscular pain.
  - Helps decrease the abnormal wearing of joint surfaces.
  - Decreases the stress on the ligaments holding the joints of the spine together.
  - Prevents the spine from becoming fixed in abnormal positions.
  - Prevents fatigue because muscles are being used more efficiently, allowing the body to use less energy.
  - Keeps bones and joints in the correct alignment so that muscles are being used properly.

There is one more major benefit that I would like to mention completely on its own as it deserves all the recognition it can get – it is an intense and very powerful meditation tool. When you allow

yourself to focus solely on stretching, your mind enters a zone which allows you to find far-reaching clarity and serenity. For this moment in time, you can let go of all the things in your life that are problematic. This takes practice and complete control, but I would love for everyone to experience this feeling.