

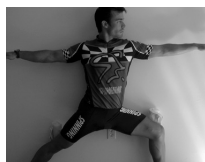
HIP OPENERS FOR CYCLISTS

Stretching is an investment in a very valuable asset—your body. Whether we are elite athletes or occasional exercisers, our bodies are our instruments for peak performance. Stretching enables your muscles to function efficiently and reduces stress that repetitive activity places on your joints and reduce the risk of injury.

Training in flexibility can minimize potential injury and help balance the muscle groups that might be overused during a training session or as a result of poor posture. In order to improve any system, an overload must be generated to that system. The same is true for flexibility training: the muscles must be overloaded to increase flexibility. The safest way to do this is with slow, sustained stretches such as yoga asanas.

Stretching the hips can alleviate back pain, particularly cyclists who tend toward tight hips. Following are some stretches to open the hips, allow for more freedom of movement and release tension in the spinal column.

WARRIOR II STANCE



Stand close to a wall so your right buttock touches it.

Have your legs about 4 to 4 1/2 feet apart, turn your right foot out 90 degrees and your left foot slightly in. Bend your right knee as close to 90 degrees as you can, keeping the left leg straight.

Place a block or towel between

your right knee and the wall and do the same with the left leg. Press firmly into both props feeling an opening in both hips. Breathe and enjoy the stretch for a few minutes before changing sides.

TRIANGLE POSE



To perform this pose correctly, a contraction of the deep hip rotators is required to align the femur, knee and foot.

Separate the feet about 3 1/2 to 4 feet, turn the right foot out 90 degrees and the left foot slightly in. Feel a firmness in the right buttock and externally rotate the thigh to align the knee with the foot. Maintaining the elongation of the spine, tip the pelvis over the right thigh, reaching the right arm as far as you can, and allow the hand to rest on your shin, ankle or foot (wherever your comfort level is). After 5-10 breaths, switch sides.

CRESCENT POSE



Step back with the left foot, bend the right knee to a right angle (keeping

the right ankle directly under the right knee) and carefully place the left knee on the floor.

Place your hands on your right thigh and open through the right hip flexor. If you can, take your hands to the floor on the inside of the right foot.

Hold this deep hip stretch for 1-2 minutes before changing sides.

BOUND ANGLE POSE

Bend your knees, bring the soles of your feet together and draw your heels in toward your groin. Clasp your feet with your hands and open your feet like a book, simultaneously, open your knees away from each other.

Slowly fold forward hinging from the hips. Stay here for at least one minute breathing into the abdomen.

PIGEON POSE



Bend both knees and place the right ankle on top of the left knee and right knee on top of the left ankle. If this is not

possible for your body, place the right leg in front of the left leg in a tight crossed leg position. (Keep the right ankle as close to the left knee as possible).

Hinge forward from the hips and breathe.

After 2-5 minutes, switch legs.

HAPPY BABY



Lie on your back and hold onto the outside of your feet.

Pull your feet down opening the hips and draw your knees as close to the side of the ribs as possible. Keep your spine long and the tail bone pressing towards the ground. Breathe and hold the pose for 1-3 minutes.

For more information,
visit www.spinning.com.