**How to stretch and the benefits of stretching**

**Stretching:**

* Improves posture and correct body alignment thereby improving postural endurance
* Counteracts the stress placed on muscles and joints whilst maintaining prolonged positions, like sitting
* Relieves tension headaches
* Maintains flexibility if done once a day and increases flexibility if done four times a day
* Prevents soft tissue stiffness after injury, such as whiplash
* Prevents injury by correcting muscle imbalances
* Enhances the efficiency of muscles during exercise and recovery of muscles after exercise
* Eases and lengthens muscles after exercise , enhancing healing of microtears
* Provides general relaxation and reinforces the mind body link
* Energises the body

**How to stretch:**

* Stretch with control and awareness, visualise the structure/area to be stretched
* Place yourself in the correct position, as shown, to stretch the target area
* Hold each stretch for at least 30 seconds to maximise the effect and repeat twice unless otherwise specified
* Breathe throughout the stretch

**When to stretch:**

* Twice a day, coincide your stretching when your body is warm:

After exercise, on waking up, after shower/bath

* Stretch when you are able to focus and able to relax so as to get the best from the stretches