

## RECREATION (A-1)

# Proper stretching proves pivotal

**QUESTION:** I am an exercise instructor and you have been educating me for at least two years. Can you explain more

about stretching? I would like a more technical explanation of what a stretch is all about. I really appreciate your column.

**ANSWER:** Well, thank you, I'm glad to see that I've been helpful and I hope there are other instructors that benefit from my column.

Stretching just happens to be one of my favorite subjects; many exercise instructors overlook the importance of stretching and their clients.

The first step toward learning proper stretching technique is

understanding what actually happens inside the body when you stretch. To stretch effectively, you must move in a way that will short-circuit one of the autonomic nervous responses. This response is a stretch reflex which is instantly triggered when stretching is done incorrectly (i.e. too quickly).

Within each muscle are microscopic sensory receptors called muscle spindles. When a muscle is stretched the receptors immediately send a message via the central nervous system to contract. This response is a protective mechanism that keeps the muscle from stretching too far and tearing. You must override this reflex to stretch effectively. Holding a stretch in a comfortable position for at least 20 seconds is a correct, safe way to stretch.

The tendon's connective tissue that join muscles to bones also contain microscopic sensory

receptors called Golgi tendon organs. The Golgi tendon organs are stimulated (by stretching) and send a message directing the tendon to accommodate the stretch by lengthening. As the tendon lengthens, you increase the range of motion at that joint.

This is very important: The Golgi tendon organs will override the stretch reflex if you hold a stretch long enough. If you stretch too quickly you won't give the sensory receptors in the tendons enough time to activate and cause the muscles to relax and the tendons to stretch.

Bouncing when stretching will trigger your stretch reflex and cause muscle contraction, creating resistance that could result in injury.

Another flexibility technique, proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (PNF), is popular among professional athletes. This type stretching uses contraction for a short time and

then lengthening the contracted area. We all inherit a certain amount of flexibility that can be increased slowly through stretching.

Work with your clients gently and with care. Listen to their needs. Ask them how they feel during a stretching period. I always say "relax through the stretch and breathe deeply."

Gradually challenge a client's stretch reflex a little more every few sessions and remember that soft, relaxing music will help put that person in the right frame of mind.

Stretching is our reward for hard work. Enjoy it!

*(Myrna Partrich is co-owner of The Workout Co. in Bloomfield Hills and an appointee to the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness. Send questions or comments for Myrna to: Myrna Partrich, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009.)*

## REC Roundup

### DIAMOND NOTES

The Bloomfield Hills School District's Recreation-Community Services Division is offering a co-ed slowpitch softball league Wednesday evenings. The season begins in late May with games at 6:15 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. This league encourages equal participation by all team members and is not intended for high levels of competition. Team fee is \$250 and includes field use and maintenance, scoresheets, bases and approximately 10 games. There is no individual player fee, but an additional \$25 non-resident fee will be required for teams where more than half of their players do not live or work in the Bloomfield Hills School District. A \$12 fee will also be payable to the umpire each week.

A mandatory managers meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 7 in the Rec Office (4174 Dublin Drive) and all teams must be represented.

Entry fee is due May 7. Call (810) 433-0885 for more information.

### BIKE RIDES

The 10th annual "Wolverine 200" Bike-A-Thon comes to Belle Isle in Detroit on May 17-18. Participants will have 24 hours to ride five miles over a safe course that is free of cars. The registration fee is \$25 and registration forms can be picked up at information desks throughout the Detroit Medical Center and also at local bicycle stores in the Metro Detroit area.

All proceeds from the fundraiser, sponsored by the Wolverine Sports Club, help support the Burn Center at Detroit Receiving Hospital. Call (313) 745-3484 for more information.

The Addison Oaks Spring Classic is scheduled for Sunday, May 18. Riders ages 4 years and older can participate, and there will be a cash purse in the men's pro class and women's elite class events. Call (810) 693-2432 for additional details.

Addison Oaks County Park is located on W. Romeo Road in Leonard.

Interested in quality cycling competitions in Northern Michigan? Birchwood Inn, located just three miles north of Harbor Springs, is continuing its tradition of superlative events with

Birchwood Inn's First Annual Mountain Bike Race, May 23-25. This fat tire tour is being conducted one week before the 7th annual Harbor Springs Cycling Classic.

The Memorial Day weekend gala also includes the popular Whitefish On The Beach Fish and Beer Festival at the Harbor Springs Chamber of Commerce. Call Birchwood Inn at 1-800-530-9955 to make reservations or receive more detailed information.

### ON THE RUN

The 19th annual Greater Berkley 1 Mile and 10K Run marks the sixth stop on the Motor City Striders 1997 long distance running schedule. The Berkley Community Center is the site for the races scheduled for morning of Sunday, May 11. Call (810) 444-9099 for registration information.

The MADD Wayne County Chapter is sponsoring the 2nd annual **SK MADD/Carys** Casar Run From The Heart on Saturday, May 17 in Edward Hines Park. Walkers are welcome and T-shirts and prizes will be available.

Registration begins at 8 a.m. race day. Call (313) 721-8181 for additional information.

The Sylvan Lake Anniversary Walk/Run is set for Saturday, May 24. A five-kilometer race kicks off the race day festivities at 9 a.m. followed by a one-mile at 9:01 a.m.

The course starts and ends at the Sylvan Lake Community Center, 2485 Pine of Pines Drive off Orchard Lake Road between Telegraph and Middlebelt.

Entry fee is \$12 by mail until Saturday, May 17. Race day registration is \$15 and lasts from 8 a.m.-8:45 a.m. at the Community Center.

For a registration form or additional details, call (810) 682-6157 or (810) 355-5151 ext. 111.

Win great prizes, meet new people and put your feet to good use at the upcoming Summer Stroll for Epilepsy at the Community Center.

The Summer Stroll, geared toward individuals, families and company teams, is a five-kilometer walk held in over 40 locations nationwide as part of an annual fund-raising initiative dedicated to creating revenue

and awareness for services to children and adults with epilepsy.

The Detroit event is scheduled for Saturday, July 5 at the Michigan Testfest in the New Center area. Registration begins at 9 a.m. followed by the kickoff walk at 10 a.m. The distance is approximately five kilometers with rest stops along the way.

Call (810) 351-7979 for more information or visit the Epilepsy Center of Michigan's web site at <http://www.epilepsymichigan.org>

### IN-LINE INFO

"Skate Safely and Smart," a comprehensive in-line skating safety clinic and demonstration, will be held at Maple Beach in Kensington Metropark on Saturday, May 17.

The event, scheduled for 10 a.m.-3 p.m., is co-sponsored by Health For Medical Centers of West Bloomfield, Waterford and Novi as well as the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority. Modern Skate & Surf will provide 160 pairs of skates and safety equipment for participants to try.

Henry Ford's Center for Athletic Medicine will also provide tips for skating safely, and Team Extreme, a nationally ranked in-line racing team, will provide one-on-one coaching for beginners and experienced skaters alike.

The event is free except for the required Metroparks vehicle entry permit, which is \$3 weekend and holidays.

The clinic will be repeated on Saturday, June 21.

For more information, contact Kensington Metropark (near the Millford/Brighton area) at 1-800-477-3178.

Premier in-line racers from across the country will converge at Waterford Hills Race Track Monday, May 12 for the third leg of the USAC National Professional In-Line Race Series.

The top in-line sponsored teams are expected to compete, including national, international and world champions from Ultimate, Hyper, Rollerblade, Kryptonics, Miller and Bont racing teams.

The event, sponsored by The Great Skate (29100 Hayes in Roseville), will be preceded by "The Motown Throwdown" May 10-11 at The Great Skate. This two-day indoor race will spotlight the Wolverine Speed Skating Team and other squads from around the country.

For specific event times or additional information, call (810) 777-4441.

### ON THE LINKS

The American Cancer Society will conduct a pair of charity golf tournaments in the upcoming months.

Mendowbrook Country Club in Northville is the site for the 1997 Celebrity Golf Classic: A Day of Golf with Mr. Hockey and Mrs. Hockey and Friends. Set for Monday, June 30, this event will give golfers an opportunity to play with hockey legend Gordie Howe and other celebrities.

Cost is \$250 per person or \$1,000 per foursome. Dinner tickets are \$25.

In addition, the 22nd annual Babe Zaharias Golf Championship and Auction will take off Monday, Aug. 11 at Walnut Creek Country Club in Lyon

### Township.

Cost is \$175 per person or \$700 per foursome. Dinner tickets are \$25.

Money raised from both tournaments supports the American Cancer Society's programs and services for local cancer patients and their families as well as promising cancer researchers. An auction also accompanies both events.

Call (810) 657-5353 for additional information regarding either tournament.

Michael Woolery scored a hole-in-one at Evergreen Hills Golf Course in Southfield, April 15. Woolery used a 3-wood to ace the 165-yard third hole and shot 60 for nine holes.

(Items for the Rec Roundup can be submitted to staff writer Chris Mayer by fax at 810-644-1314, by phone at 810-901-2589 or by mail at: The Eccentric Sports Department, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009.)

## Power play

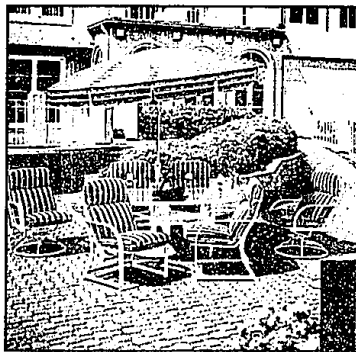


STAFF PHOTO BY JERRY ZOLNICK

**The Bolt Way:** Jennifer Keeney uses a PowerBelt during an aerobics class at The Workout Co. in Bloomfield Hills. The Workout Co. is the state's first exercise studio to incorporate this innovative fitness product into its classes. "They've been extremely popular so far; people grab them every day," said Myrna Partrich, co-owner of The Workout Co. "The nice thing about them is people can use them at their own convenience, but we have been recommending PowerBelts be used only during low-impact aerobics classes." Joshua Corn invented the PowerBelt, a lightweight, padded belt worn around the waist. It is equipped with two disc spring resistance units located near the hips and fitted with ergonomically designed handles attached to a disc spring system by high strength cords. The handles, which retract when not in use for convenience and safety, can be operated with a variety of arm movements to work the major muscle groups of the arms, back and shoulders. The PowerBelt is comfortable, unobtrusive and adjustable for all fitness levels. Exercisers can use one of The Workout Co.'s 40 PowerBelts at no charge. Partrich also said PowerBelt Aerobics classes are coming soon to the popular studio located at 6652 Telegraph Road. Call (810) 855-1033 for details.

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## Sand volleyball makes way to Marshbank Park

Marshbank Park doesn't have a beach, but sand volleyball is sure to bring a touch of the Pacific coast to the West Bloomfield facility this summer.

West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation is offering sand volleyball leagues for people ages 16 and older beginning Monday, June 9. There are two open leagues for two-man teams, one co-rec, four-person team league and one open league for four-man teams.

Games start at 6:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. with each team playing a 10-game season. Trophies and T-shirts will be presented to the winning teams at the end of the season.

Registration, which ends Friday, May 30, is \$40 for two-man teams and \$60 for co-rec and open quad teams. All games take place at Marshbank, located on Hiller Road north of Commerce Road.

For more information, visit The West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation at 4640 Walnut Lake Road or call (810) 735-2500.

DAY	LEAGUE	FEES
Tuesdays	Open-2 man	\$40
Thursdays	Open-2 man	\$40
Mondays	Open-quads	\$60
Wednesdays	Co-rec-quads	\$60