

'The stretching debate'

Commentaries by:

J. Beam, J. DeLany, W. Haynes, R. Lardner, C. Liebenson, S. Martin,
P. Rowland, R. Schleip, J. Sharkey, B. Vaughn

Response by:

R. Herbert and M. Gabriel

Introduction

In August 2002, an article appeared in *The British Medical Journal* that created a great deal of interest and controversy. The paper in question (Herbert & Gabriel 2002) evaluated the benefits (or lack of benefits) associated with stretching procedures in relation to protection from injury and post-exercise soreness.

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In order to clarify the issues, JBMT invited 10 experts including those with specific involvement in athletics as well as practitioner/therapists (with backgrounds in osteopathy, chiropractic, physiotherapy, massage therapy and Rolfing) who use stretching modalities in their work, to comment on the article from their perspectives.

JBMT invited the original authors to respond to the 10 commentaries in order to create an open forum. Their response follows on from the 10 commentaries, which are published in alphabetical order.

If you, the reader, have further comments to make that JBMTs editorial team consider to contain useful insights, JBMT undertakes to publish these in a subsequent issue.

REFERENCES

- Herbert R, Gabriel M 2002 Effects of stretching before and after exercising on muscle soreness and risk of injury: systematic review. *British Medical Journal* 325: 468

Leon Chaitow
Editor

Commentary 1

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In response to the recent study by Herbert and Gabriel (2002), I would like to make several points which center on the all-inclusive nature of the findings. The authors state pre- and post-exercise stretching does not offer protection from muscle soreness. To determine the effects of stretching on muscle soreness, five studies were reviewed (Herbert &

Gabriel 2002). In each investigation, delayed-onset muscle soreness (DOMS) was the dependent variable. DOMS is believed to be a combination of damage to muscle membranes and a secondary inflammatory reaction (Wilmore & Costill 1999) as a result of eccentric contractions (Talag 1973, Newham et al. 1983) and maximal isometric