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BRAT News
Birmingham Running and Triathlon Club Newsletter

Volume 6, Issue 2

National Relays

What is a great honour to stand as BRAT female captain, it does bear the responsibility of leading to organize teams for the annual National Relay Champs in Nottingham. Well therefore waste no time in thanking and congratulating Jon Tully, Tazzy, Duncan and PPS for sorting a 17 teams out so successfully (15 teams from results list).

The morning's races involved the female and mixed teams. It was the familiar huddle and builds in getting out registration, getting the right coloured hat to the appropriate team member and racking the bikes etc. Meanwhile, Tazzy and co. were assembling the impressive BRAT gaiters housed with large BRAT signs, and making out our BRAT banner, asking bar into the hearts of the oppositor!

The female open event, for which BRAT are defending champions, attracted a strong field, notably the Planet X and TriathlonCoach.com teams. It might be worth the adding of the point that given the competition is called 'The National Club Relay' one might think that such an event would be for nation clubs. However, should anyone reading this like to join either one of the aforementioned clubs - well good luck (weasel) I suggest to contact/focus their club's secretary. Anyhow, the race started and after the customary vicious noise of the warm start (due to the mixed was start) it was clear that competition for your bits of a high standard. Debbie Southwood (aka The Dabaton) finished the warm start in an impressive 6th place, a very last leg, whilst poor Emma Smith came out battered and bruised. Once all 4 members of each team finished the swim it was on to the bike - 3 laps round the lake, with one side against the other.

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Client Birmingham Running and Triathlon Club
Business Sports Club
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Birmingham Running and Triathlon Club Newsletter

Managing & Understanding Injury

Over the last few months or so, I will be writing articles for BRAT based on the subject of injury prevention. I hope you all find the series interesting and encourage any comments or questions via email.

I am looking forward to writing for such a diverse and experienced group of athletes, both from medical and non-medical backgrounds. I also invite BRAT members to email me with specific questions about their injuries so I can address on diagnosis, prognosis and management. These questions will form part of an additional section of each edition called 'On the physio's couch'.

Please address all these questions with a paragraph detailing the history behind your injury and any other feedback regarding the article to patrick@physioclinic.co.uk.

For further contact details, visit our website www.physioclinic.co.uk or call 0121 440 7736.

Physiological effects of stretching
It is generally accepted that stretching causes an increase in blood flow and temperature within the muscle, thereby creating an optimum environment for myofibrillar contractility. The increased blood flow allows improved oxygen uptake by the muscles and the removal of waste products that are produced as a consequence of muscle contraction. The increased flexibility allows the absorption of greater forces, more effective storage and usage of elastic recoil and greater energy delivery during contraction.

Static, dynamic or ballistic?
It is generally accepted that ballistic or bouncing stretches are ineffective and create a considerable amount of micro-trauma and muscle soreness. PNF stretching provides the greatest improvement in range of motion. Dynamic stretching involves stretching, muscle contraction, control and movement rehearsal and is a good way of progressing from static stretching to sporting activity. It is therefore useful in warm-up and should be performed following about 10 minutes of gentle aerobic exercise.

Why warm up?
The evidence suggests that warm-up can reduce muscle strain injury by increasing blood flow and temperature in the muscle prior to activity. It also optimally prepares the athlete from the point of view of practicing specific movement patterns. It was found in an elastic stiffness reduced significantly with 10 minutes of jogging at 60% and the same effect was achieved with 5 x 30 second stretches with 30 seconds in between.

Ice baths
The use of ice baths for recovery has been the subject of much debate over the last 5-10 years with Paul Fleck being one of the biggest advocates. In 2007, an Australian group of researchers reported that there were no significant differences between two groups with regard to changes in most pain parameters, tenderness, strength, swelling, angle leg hip test or serum CK over time. There was a significant difference in pain in seconds at 24 hours, with the intervention group demonstrating a greater increase in pain than control group.

Summary
Most of the recent research available is based on subjects with restricted flexibility and there is very little available evidence on cohorts of 'normal'. In my experience of working with athletes, stretching is a very personal thing. Some find that it is an essential component of their conditioning and others find that it has negative effects on performance. I would therefore not advocate an rigorous and systematic static stretching programme for all muscle groups especially immediately before training and competition. If there are areas that have been found to be restricted or frequently cause pain and soreness, it may be worth progressing stretching to a pre-training programme.

Peter Hatten MScP, BSc, PhD
Chartered Physiotherapist,
Physioclinic, Ltd

Injury Prevention the key to successful performance (Part 1)



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By Car: On the A441 out of town, just after the Co-op
By Train: 5 minutes walk from Bournville Station
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www.thelaughingsole.org.uk

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