

IMAGINED FLEXIBILITY

Applying imagery can increase your flexibility

A great deal of research has been conducted on stretching and flexibility. Much of the impetus for this research arises from the commonly held beliefs that if you were more flexible, you could perform your sport better and you might decrease your chances of injury. Of course a notion does not make something true, which is why scientists want to put these beliefs to the test. And of course we have covered many of the latest developments regarding stretching, and you need not look any farther than this issue's research review titled [TO STRETCH...OR NOT](#). But here is an interesting concept worth considering: could you enhance your flexibility by simply imagining yourself stretching? After all, imagery has been shown to enhance learning and certain types of motor performance, so why not flexibility as well? Researchers for the Center of Research and Innovation in Sport at the University Claude Bernard in Lyon, France, wanted to know to what extent your imagining yourself stretching would actually increase your flexibility.

Power Key: stretching, flexibility, mental practice, imagery



Your mind is a powerful “muscle.” You might even be able to increase your flexibility by simply imagining yourself doing so.

Photo: [Shawn Warren](#)

Original Research

Guillot, A., et al. Does motor imagery enhance stretching and flexibility? *Journal of Sports Sciences* 28(3):291-298, 2010.