



## **Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling System (NOFFS)**

### **Movement Preparation**

Traditionally when people prepare to train they enter into a routine that primarily consists of a mixture of stretching, as well as a form of general activity to warm up tissue before engaging in activity. Stretching is an important part of any warm up or cool-down. It is vital for injury prevention, muscle recovery, optimizing muscle gains, and increasing flexibility. However, there are different types of stretching, and each affects your body in different ways. That being said, it is important to understand how, and when to use different types of stretching.

Static stretching, holding a stretch for a long duration of time, works by sending a message to the muscle saying, “shut this tightness off,” ultimately forcing the muscle to release and relax. Whether you are preparing to train or begin work on your operational platform, movement requires dynamic, fluid action. By holding long static stretches right before a bout of activity, you are effectively shutting off the muscles when you need them the most, making the upcoming physical demands harder on the body.

It’s not that static stretching is a bad idea; it can be a great tool when done correctly and at the appropriate time. Static stretching is best used post-workout or at the end of the day to elongate the muscle and connective tissue, while turning off the nervous system (your brain and the nerves running to and from your muscles). It is also effective on recovery emphasis days, as long static holds help to produce long term changes in the fascia (the band of elastic tissue that envelops the body, beneath the skin), ultimately improving muscle balance and flexibility.

Activities that are done to “warm up,” or increase your body’s temperature are often done without a specific purpose in mind, except of course to “warm up,” or sweat. You may see people ride a stationary bike, or go for a light jog for 5 minutes. There is nothing wrong with riding a stationary bike, or going for a light run, as long as there is a purpose for it. You need to ask yourself this question, is a light ride on a stationary bike appropriate for a Sailor who is warming up for multidirectional movements?



For more information about NOFFS, visit the [NMCPHC Active Living Website:](http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/active-living/Pages/active-living.aspx)  
<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/active-living/Pages/active-living.aspx>