

Workout #64: Flexibility Training

Objective: To increase athletes' functional range of motion.

Description: Athletes should perform these active-isolated stretching exercises either after running or apart from their running workouts. A rope can be used to assist at the end of each movement to increase the limb's range of motion.

Coaching Point: For each exercise, athletes should move actively through the range of motion, remembering to contract the muscle group opposing the one being stretched, and use the rope only for light assistance at the end of the range of motion.

Glutes

The athlete should lie on his back and bend the exercising knee, placing the hands behind his knee/thigh (Figure 64-1). Using the abdominals and hip flexors, the athlete lifts the exercising leg toward the chest until he can go no farther. The athlete should gently assist the leg at the end of the stretch with his hands (Figure 64-2). He should hold the stretch for 1 to 2 seconds, return to the starting position, and repeat.

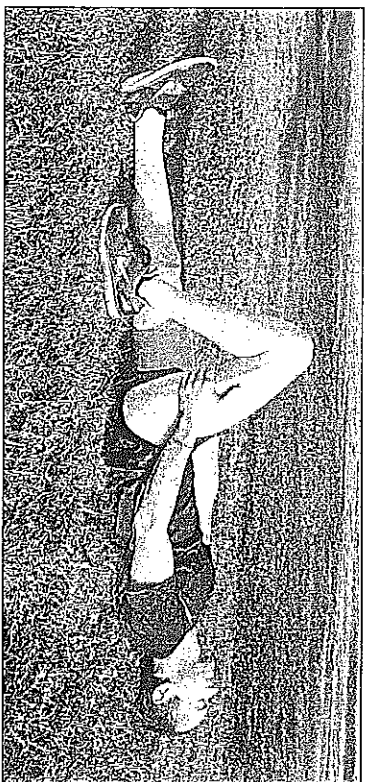


Figure 64-1

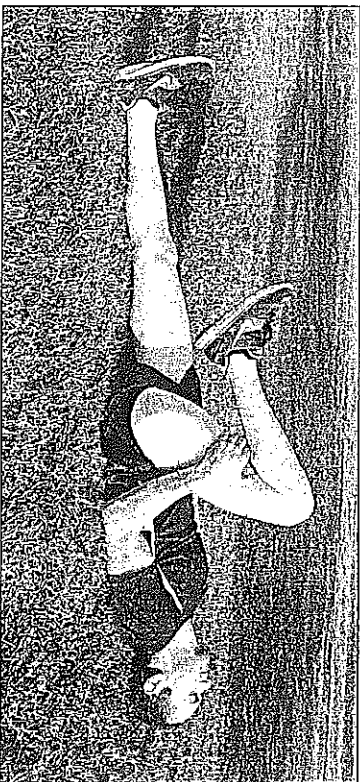


Figure 64-2

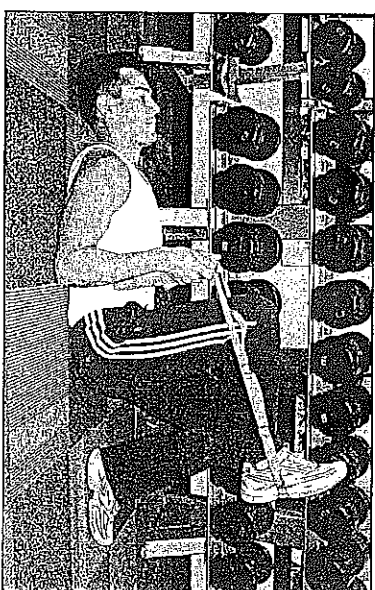


Figure 64-3

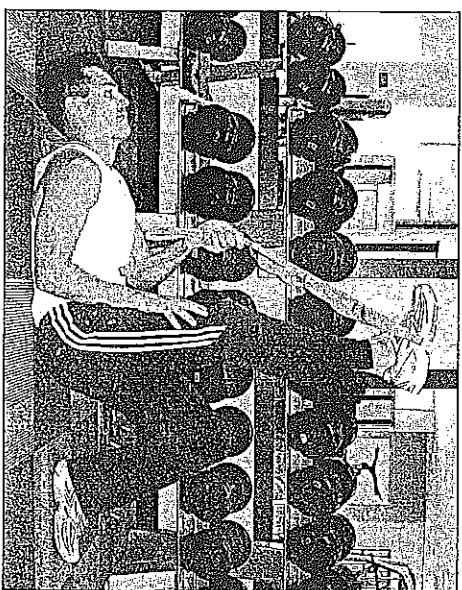


Figure 64-4

Bent-Leg Hamstring

The athlete should lie on his back with both knees bent and feet flat on the ground. The athlete should make a loop with the rope and place the foot of the leg he's exercising into the loop. The athlete should lift his leg until his thigh is perpendicular to the ground (Figure 64-3). He should grasp the ends of the rope with one hand and place the other on top of the thigh of the exercising leg to stabilize it. He should gradually extend the leg by contracting the quadriceps, causing the foot to rise to the ceiling (Figure 64-4). The goal is to lock the knee and have the foot pointing straight up. The athlete should use the rope for gentle assistance at the end of the stretch, but not pull the leg into position. He should hold the stretch for 1 to 2 seconds, return to the starting position, and repeat.

Straight-Leg Hamstring

The athlete should lie on his back. He should begin with his non-exercising knee bent and with that foot flat on the ground. The athlete should make a loop with the rope and place the foot of the leg he's exercising into the loop, locking the knee so the leg is extended straight out (Figure 64-5). From the hip and using the quadriceps, he should lift his leg toward his chest, aiming the foot toward the ceiling or sky. He should grasp the ends of the rope with both hands and slightly pull the rope toward him to assist at the end of the stretch, but not pull the leg into position (Figure 64-6). He should hold the stretch for 1 to 2 seconds, return to the starting position, and repeat.

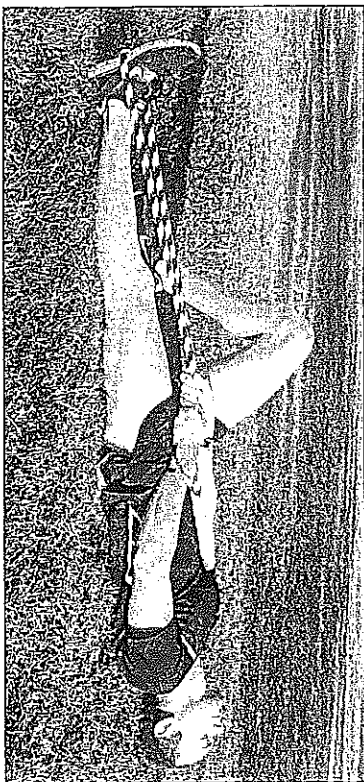


Figure 64-5

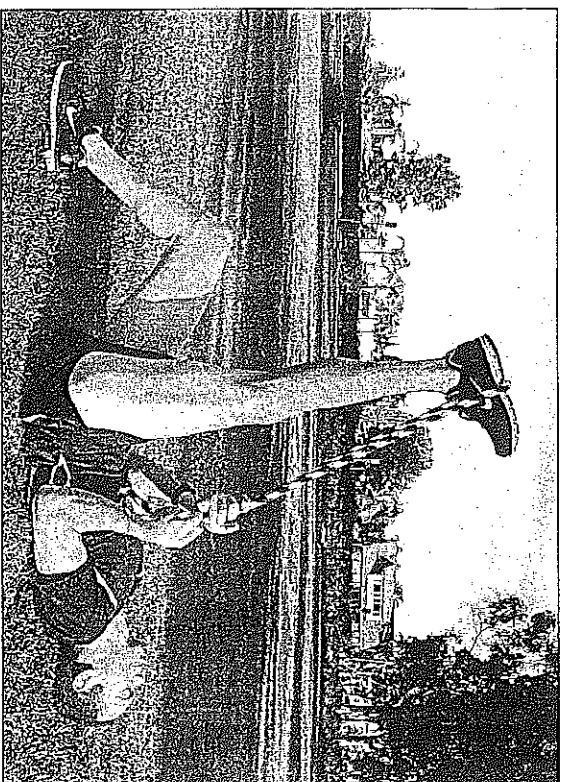


Figure 64-6



Figure 64-7

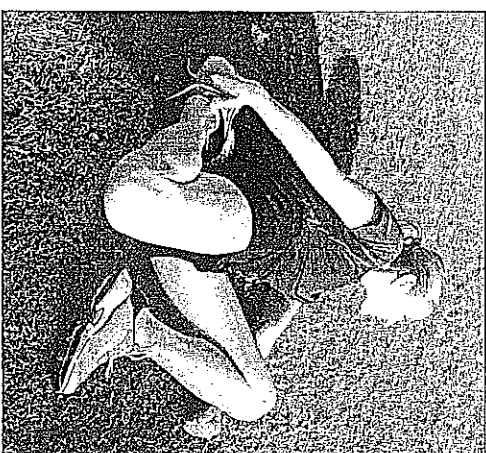


Figure 64-8

Quadriceps

The athlete should lie on her side with her knees bent (in a fetal position). She should slide her bottom arm under the thigh of her bottom leg (Figure 64-7). She should reach down with her upper hand and grasp the shin, ankle, or forefoot of her upper leg. She should keep her knee bent and her leg parallel to the ground. The runner should contract her hamstrings and gluteus maximus, and move the upper leg back as far as she can, using her hand or the rope to give a gentle assist at the end of the stretch (Figure 64-8). She should hold the stretch for 1 to 2 seconds, return to the starting position, and repeat.

Adductors

The athlete should lie on his back with both legs extended straight out, looping the rope around the inside of the ankle, then under the foot, of the exercising leg, so the ends of the rope are on the outside. He should lock that knee and slightly rotate the other leg inward (Figure 64-9). From the hip and using the abductors, the runner should extend the exercising leg out from the side of his body, leading with the heel (Figure 64-10). He should keep slight tension on the rope and use it for gentle assistance at the end of the stretch, but not pull the leg into position. He should hold the stretch for 1 to 2 seconds, return to the starting position, and repeat.

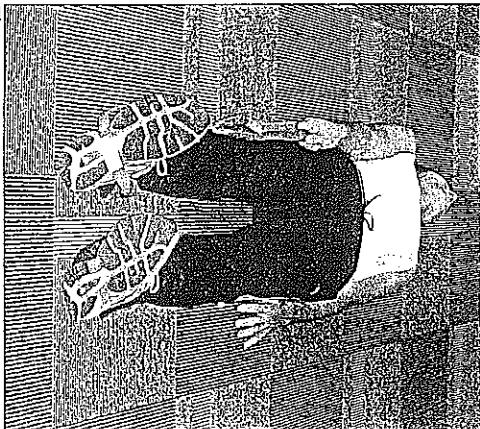


Figure 64-9

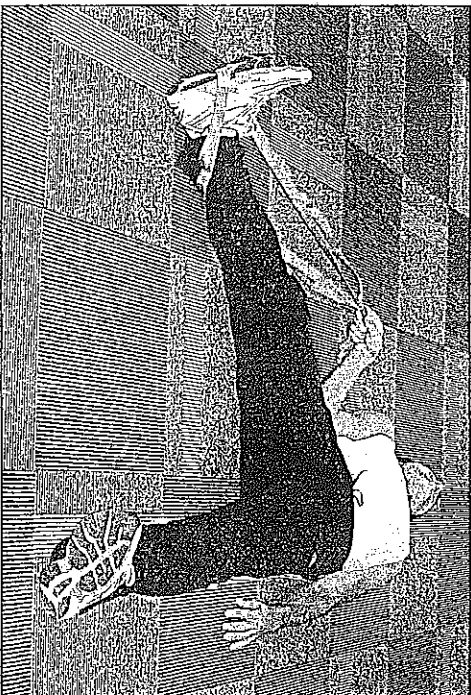


Figure 64-10

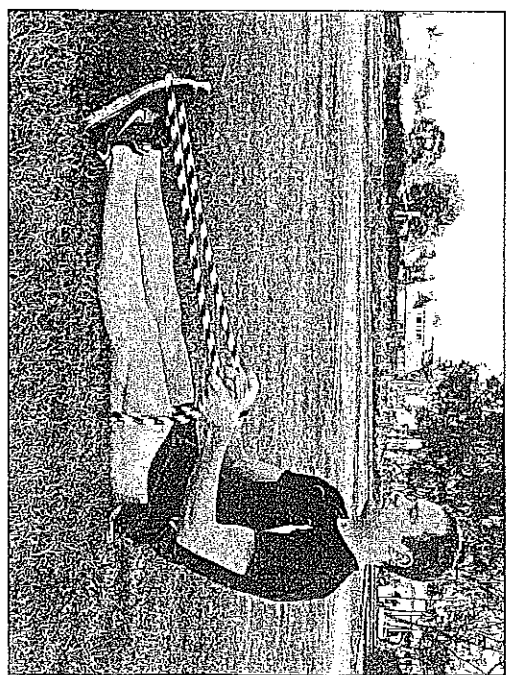


Figure 64-11

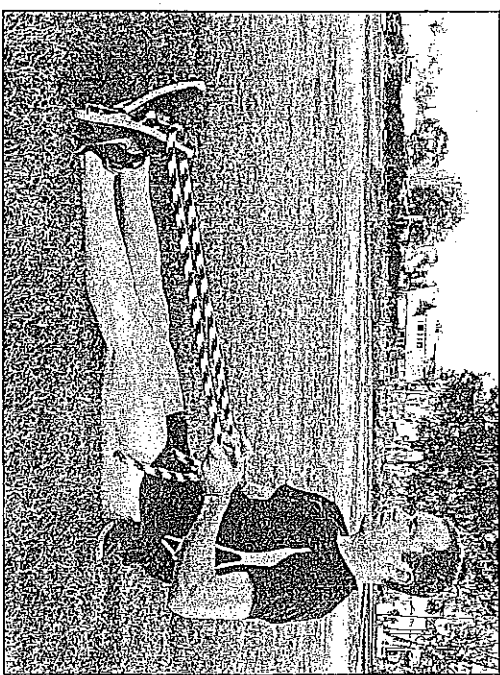


Figure 64-12

Calves

The athlete should sit with both legs straight out in front of him. He should loop a rope around the foot of his exercising leg (Figure 64-11). The runner should flex his foot back toward the ankle, using the rope for a gentle assist at the end of the movement (Figure 64-12). He should hold the stretch for 1 to 2 seconds, return to the starting position, and repeat.