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Unique Stretching Tool Offers Options to Increase Flexibility

Study shows Thera-Band® Stretch Strap is as effective as partner-assisted stretching for increasing range of motion and hamstring flexibility.

Akron, Ohio – May 31, 2012 – Researchers at Memorial University of Newfoundland in St. John’s, Canada, recently published a study in the Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research that compared the Thera-Band® Stretch Strap to partner-assisted stretching for hamstring flexibility. The Thera-Band® Stretch Strap, an innovative replacement to static only stretching devices, was designed to support both static and contract-relax, or “PNF” stretching (proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation) stretching without the need for a partner.

A recent review paper, Current Concepts in Muscle Stretching for Exercise and Rehabilitation, presented the advantages and disadvantages of different stretching techniques and a summation that static stretching may decrease immediate muscle performance, while contract-relax stretching may be more beneficial for immediate gains in range of motion with less detriment to muscle performance. PNF stretching involves a muscle contraction prior to initiation of the stretch, and it’s thought that contracting the target muscle or its antagonist prior to stretching may increase muscle length through neurologic-mediated mechanisms. While effective, PNF techniques often require a partner to provide resistance to the muscle contraction prior to the stretch.

Thirteen healthy adults participated in the Memorial University of Newfoundland study and each performed five different hamstring stretching techniques on separate days in random order. Hip range of motion (ROM), muscle reaction time, and movement velocity were measured before and immediately after each stretching condition.

The researchers found that all stretching techniques significantly increased hip ROM, but there was no significant difference between the techniques. Interestingly, both the Stretch Strap and partner-assisted techniques reduced movement velocity, while maintaining the same reaction times regardless of the type of stretch. They concluded that the Thera-Band Stretch Strap is as effective as partner-assisted stretching at increasing ROM, but stated that “competitive athletes should use these techniques to improve flexibility in a separate stretching routine, and not immediately before training and competition.”
Page 2, May 31, 2012

Based on these results, the Thera-Band Stretch Strap fulfilled its intent stated by the authors “to make PNF stretching techniques a more viable option to improve range of motion and overall flexibility for a single individual. The elasticity of the Stretch Strap provides resistance for muscle contractions potentially replacing the need for a partner.”

Learn more about the study by listening to a podcast interview with study co-author Dr. David Behm.

About the Academy
The Thera-Band® Academy was formed to scientifically document the benefits of resistance exercise and pain relief, guide the company in its development of new products and exercise programs, and to promote therapeutic exercise and pain management through professional and consumer education. The Academy web site is a unique resource that connects healthcare professionals and consumers to the ever growing body of knowledge on exercise. Registration is free and provides access to the largest database of rehab exercises, protocols, research and education in the world.

About Performance Health
Featuring leading brands like Thera-Band®, Biofreeze® and the new Pedigenix™ Foot Care System, Performance Health offers a broad portfolio of products for the therapy, rehabilitation, wellness, massage, podiatric and performance markets. In addition to market-leading products, Performance Health provides practice building support, evidence-based protocols, clinical and product education, turn-key dispensing and pain management solutions.


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