



# MORNING STRETCH

WITH  
DENISE AUSTIN



**Tuesday June 09, 2009 — Welcome to Morning Stretch with Denise Austin. Get daily advice, tips, and inspiration from America's favorite fitness expert.**

## **Fitness Flash** **Stretch Safely!**

You may have heard that it's good to stretch before and after your workouts, but do you know why it's so important? Stretching helps prime your muscles for action, keeping them supple and preventing injuries! However, it is possible to stretch yourself the wrong way, say the experts at Montana State University. To avoid this, they advise the following:

- Make sure you aren't stretching cold muscles. Get ready for the challenge with a gentle five-minute walk or jog, or even a warm bath.
- Think slow and smooth! Aim for what is called a static stretch. Reach until you feel tension but not pain, and hold that position for 20 seconds to one minute. Be sure to never bounce while stretching!
- Remember to breathe deeply and naturally throughout each move. Don't hold your breath! Ease into stretching, rather than trying to touch your nose to the floor the first time around. It will take time for your body to gain maximum flexibility — so don't rush it!

