



How Stretching and Strength Exercises Help Your Muscles

KS2 PE

KS3 SCIENCE

Ages 10-14



3 min read

What Do Your Muscles Do?

Your **muscles** are bundles of special fibres that help you move, hold things, and keep your body working. Every time you run, jump, laugh, or even sit up straight, your muscles are doing the job. But just like any tool, muscles need regular care and exercise to stay healthy and strong.

What Happens When You Do Strength Exercises?

Strength exercises are activities that make your muscles work hard against resistance—like lifting weights, doing push-ups, or climbing. When you do these exercises, tiny fibres inside your muscles actually get small tears. This might sound bad, but it's actually brilliant! Your body repairs these tiny tears and makes the muscle fibres even thicker and stronger than before.

Think of it like building a wall. Each time you knock down part of your wall and rebuild it with thicker bricks, the wall gets stronger. Your muscles work the same way—they break down a bit during exercise, then rebuild themselves stronger.

The more you do strength exercises, the bigger and more powerful your muscles become. This is why athletes and gym-goers have such large, defined muscles—they're training them regularly.

Why Is Stretching Important?

Stretching is when you gently pull your muscles to make them longer. It might seem opposite to strength training, but it's just as important. When you stretch, you improve your **flexibility**—how far your joints can move and how easily your muscles can lengthen.

Think of it like a rubber band. If you never stretch a rubber band, it gets stiff and might snap. But if you gently stretch it regularly, it stays flexible and bouncy.

Stretching helps prevent **injury** because flexible muscles are less likely to tear during activity. It also reduces muscle tightness and soreness after exercise, and helps your body move more freely in everyday life.

How Do They Work Together?

The best approach is to do **both** stretching and strength exercises. Strength training builds power and muscle size, while stretching keeps those muscles flexible and healthy. Together, they create a balanced fitness routine that keeps you strong, mobile, and injury-free.

Remember, you don't need to be an athlete to benefit from these exercises. Just **20-30 minutes** of activity most days—including some strength work and stretching—can make a huge difference to your health and how good you feel.