



**MONICA NIEHOF**

**STRETCH  
THERAPIST**

Monica Niehof is a qualified Stretch Therapist. She completed a Diploma in Human Anatomy and Physiology. She also received intensive theoretical and practical training in stretch therapy.

Monica works in association with StretchingSA and directs the StretchingSA Roodepoort Clinic in the west of Johannesburg since January 2020. She received thorough theoretical and practical training and has completed various case studies where she applied the Active Isolated Stretching technique with success.

## What is Stretch Therapy?

Stretch therapy is a specialised field wherein a therapist who is specifically trained in isolated stretch techniques can accurately relieve your musculoskeletal pain and issues. Thereby rehabilitating the mobility, elasticity and strength of your body's daily movements, posture and extreme performances. Hence it is also called 'non-surgical bone and muscle dysfunctional repair®'. This refers to our intervention in your health and wellness in a non-medical way, via specialised exercise done by another person on you. In this case, our intervention is done by a therapist on your body. The therapist uses specialised exercises to improve your health and wellbeing in a non-medical way.



## Contact Us

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# Stretch Therapist

Musculoskeletal pain • Injury • Back & Neck pain  
Sports performance • Optimal flexibility

**StretchingSA Roodepoort**

# What is Active Isolated Stretching?

Over the past two decades, many experts have advocated prolonged stretching up to 60 seconds. A prolonged stretch up to 60 seconds means that a person would move into a stretching position and keep it there for a longer period.

For many years this was used as the gold standard for all individuals and athletes. However, after 30 years of research by Aaron Mattes, it was found that a stretch greater than 2 seconds actually decreases the blood flow within the tissue thus creating localized ischemia and lactic acid build up.

This also increases irritation and chance of injury of local muscular, tendonous, lymphatic as well as neural tissues, similar to the effects and consequences of trauma, overuse syndromes, and metabolic disease states. This phenomenon indicates that there has to be a better technique for proper stretching. And indeed it was found, now called Active Isolated Stretching.

## Active Isolated Stretching

Active Isolated Stretching (AIS) is a stretching method developed by Aaron L. Mattes. AIS utilizes precise movements to isolate a specific area to be stretched. Once in the proper position, the stretch is held for 1.5 to 2 seconds, released, and then repeated 8-10 times in a set.

AIS is effective in reducing pain in the human body caused by incorrect posture, injury, post-surgical conditions, degeneration and inactivity.

**We are a unique flexibility, sports and rehabilitation clinic that uses AIS techniques and strengthening exclusively for rehabilitation and chronic pain.**

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# Primary principles for AIS

There are two primary principles that provide the basis for how AIS works.



**Reciprocal inhibition**, which means that if you want to lift your arm, your nervous system has to shut off the muscles that bring your arm down. This means that AIS involves your nervous system in the stretch, making it easier for the muscles to elongate.

The second principle is **to hold the stretch for 1.5 to 2 seconds, and no longer**. Research shows that holding a stretch for longer than 2.5 to 3 seconds will cause your body to engage a protective reflex. This stretch reflex will cause a muscle contraction in the muscle you are trying to stretch. It is therefore important not to hold any stretch too long, not even 3 seconds.

By not “tripping” the stretch reflex, you are able to get a gentle stretch, without the body fighting itself. The stretch is repeated 8 to 10 times in a set. The repeated “pumping” action of the muscle allows for increased circulation to the area. Because the stretches target highly specific areas of the body, AIS provides an efficient and effective stretch.

These specific movements also help relieve symptoms of stress. Stress touches all of our lives. Gentle stretching movements can invigorate the circulatory, respiratory and neuromuscular systems, which help alleviate many of the symptoms of stress.



## Benefits of StretchingSA

- + Helps to relieve muscle soreness.
- + Reduces muscle spasm.
- + Helps to address and reduce chronic pain.
- + Reduces the risk of muscle strain and tearing.
- + Aid in the recovery from injury.
- + Helps to increase athletic performance.
- + Helps with stress relieve.
- + Improves oxygen and nutrient flow to cells.
- + Helps stimulate lymph circulation and elimination of cellular waste.
- + Helps to maintain good posture.
- + Helps to regain and maintain the full range of motion of a joint.
- + Promotes balance in the body
- + Promotes healthy growth in children and youth
- + Prevent postural problems in preadolescent growth spurts.