

# Developing flexibility

In steps one and two we discussed why flexibility training is beneficial to any athlete (especially tricksters) and we laid out a set of ground rules and facts that give us some boundaries to work within. In this step, we are going to discuss in greater detail [how to train] different types of flexibility, reinforcing those rules; And! I've included an ass-load of sample stretches for your own use demonstrated by none other than me, Jujimufu! This is a gigantic page: I recommend skimming the info first, then returning to the navigational outline which is available just below for future reference.

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## Developing dynamic flexibility

Dynamic flexibility is flexibility in motion! It is best developed through dynamic stretching. Not only does it perfect intermuscular coordination, it also reduces passive resistance of movement throughout an active range of motion.

### Guidelines for the dynamic stretching method

Dynamic stretching involves moving parts of your body while gradually increasing reach, speed of movement, or both. It does not involve stopping and holding the stretched position. There is no bobbing, bouncing, or jerky movements. The movements should be

controlled throughout the range of motion despite being quick. Repeat: The stretch is not sudden, it is **CONTROLLED AND FLUID**! Dynamic stretches are best performed in multiple sets with a number of repetitions (varying depending on the movement). Fatigue causes a decrease in amplitude of dynamic movements, so dynamic stretching is not recommended when you are beat and tired; It is also not recommended that you work dynamic stretching to any point of exhaustion. Do only the possible number of repetitions that you can do without diminishing your range of motion. **[CAUTION]** *Doing more repetitions in the diminished range of motion will set the nervous regulation of the muscles' length at that level, a level of lowered flexibility!*

So to maximize dynamic flexibility increase and prevent any reduction of it - Don't do it while fatigued and don't repeat reduced efforts. Even after reaching the desired maximal range of motion in a joint in any direction of movement, do not exhaust yourself with too many more repetitions of this movement; You will set an unnecessarily solid memory of the range of these movements. You'll have to overcome these memories in order to make more progress. We'll talk more about appropriate volume (Sets/ reps/ frequency) up ahead. You should strive to practice it fresh and finish it fresh. Fresh like Ultra Norsk fresh, which is very fresh! So remember now, that the key word for dynamic stretching is: **FRESH!**

## Dynamic stretching in your training

The greatest aspect of developing dynamic flexibility is it's excellent convenience. In training, it should become part of your warmup; Moreover, it only takes between 10-15 minutes to do a sufficient volume of stretches to warrant an increase. I would do it after the first part of a general warm up.

## Maximizing dynamic flexibility gains (Morning routine)

Dynamic stretching increase can be maximized when carried out daily, a couple of times a day. So if you want to reach full dynamic flexibility quicker or maximize this ability it should also be done in the morning upon waking (or late afternoon upon waking if you are a tragic teen or of the vampiric persuasion). Do it before breakfast, a heavy meal can cause a diminished blood flow to the muscles, screw up digestion, or cause discomfort (Especially side lifts, DANNNNNG! Grumble stomach). If you are worried about increased catabolization of the muscles by exercising in a fasted state upon waking, do not worry: Dynamic stretching should not fatigue, and a morning routine in particular should not fatigue! Don't overdo it! The morning routine should typically take about 10-15 minutes to complete for most people, longer for novice trainees. This is about the same duration of time that dynamic stretching takes during a pre-training warmup. The purpose of this stretching is to reset the nervous regulation of the length of your muscles for the rest of the day. No cool down will be needed as long as you didn't overdo it. If so, spend some time walking around or just do some wiggles and jiggles to loose up - **DON'T EAT SKITTLES!**

Finally, go eat breakfast. Actually, if you drink a shake for breakfast, it should be possible to drink it during the stretching as long as it doesn't cause noticeable discomfort. No shake? You can drink some water. Aren't you thirsty when you wake up? I know I am!

## How to apply dynamic stretches:

Start the movements slowly and gently, gradually increasing the range and speed of the movements. **[DO NOT]** *Throw or force them! Lead or lift them.* Synchronize your breathing so you breath out when you bend forward, and breath in when bending backward. More importantly though, just breath natural and comfortably. After you have nearly reached your full range of motion, begin increasing the velocity of these movements. At this point, the last few inches of each movement will likely be less controlled, but the stretch should never be sudden. Increasing velocity will provide more benefit for actual skills. In fact, you can incorporate many basic martial arts kicks at this point (such as inside or outside crescent kicks). This allows for an easier transition into your actual martial arts or tricking practice if desired. Stretch at no less than 75% maximal velocity used in your actual skill after the first few sets of dynamic stretching.

## A selection of dynamic stretches

Below I have provided a sample selection of dynamic stretches and how to apply them. These stretches will **[SURPRISE]** Increase your dynamic flexibility! **WOW!**

### Lower body stretches:

Novice will need to start with a greater number of repetitions to achieve decent results because it will take a greater amount of repetitions to reach maximum amplitude of a stretch. For most people, maximal range of motion in a given workout can be achieved after roughly 10-15 leg raises in any given direction. I recommend 3-4 sets of 9-12 repetitions per movement in any given direction for *developing* dynamic leg flexibility. Increase the height of each lift slowly - **[SAFETY KICKS ASS]**. Switch legs after each set or in between reps. After nearing your maximum range of motion, increase velocity! After a month or two, doing this several times a week, you'll notice you can comfortably reach your maximum height in these movements with less repetitions. This should also be all the time you need to reach your maximum *potential* height as well. Less will be needed for maintenance: 15-25 leg raises would suffice.



- Front lift stretch [1]: Keep your hands up, you can use one as a target if you would like to measure progress. Maintain good posture (avoid the slouch). You can start this with the kicking leg behind you in a staggered stance or from a position with both feet shoulder width apart, side by side.



- Front lift stretch [2]: Your supporting leg should be straight and the supporting heel should be flat on the ground at all times. Begin the lift as high as feels comfortable, lifting the leg directly in front of you.



- Front lift stretch [3]: Here is the staggered stance variation. The lifting leg starts behind you, this allows you to use momentum and increase the amplitude of the stretch.



- Front lift stretch [4]: After a set or so you should reach your maximum height and the speed of the lift should be increased. Work both stances for the best result.



- Knee lift [1] This stretch is best used preceding front lift stretching. It's especially valuable for those times your hip flexors are stressed from training previously done in the week and you value caution.



- Knee lift [2] Simply lift the knee up to your chest. You can do this from the staggered stance with your rising leg starting behind you for momentum, or from a position with both feet next to each other, shoulder width apart.



- Back lift stretch [1]: Use a support at about hip height. Lower than hip height is more preferable than higher if the choice is available. You can grab onto a lot of stuff; Chain link fence, grill, patio chair, plyo platforms, your brother, the tail of your car, bleachers...



- Back lift stretch [2]: Keep the base leg's position stable and lift your other leg behind you, pointing the toes. Generally, this stretch can be slightly varied from little changes in head position or hip tilt, but the main goal is to stretch the front of your thigh: **[NOT THE GROIN]** So maintain an awareness that your lifting leg does not rotate to the outside.



- Back lift stretch [3]: Here is a back view of the stretch. View the thumbnails below to check appropriate, inappropriate, and really inappropriate leg rotation in a back lift dynamic stretch.



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- Quad squeeze stretch [1]: This is a great stretch to toss in combination with the back lift stretch. Sometimes you just want your quads to be loosened up!



- Quad squeeze stretch [2]: Keep the body upright and the hips forward by tightening the glutes - and whip the heel back.



- Quad squeeze stretch [3]: Easy, just kick your own ass! Think of it as pawing the ground like a bull or animal.



- Side lift stretch [1]: No fancy stance, look in the direction you will be kicking and keep your hands up (As all the pretty little Martial Arts boys and girls do!)



- Side lift stretch [2]: The base foot will shift to point in the opposite direction of your kick during the stretch. The lifting leg's foot maintains a lateral relationship with the floor and ceiling. You can use your hand as a marker for

progress, starting at about hip height and gradually increasing the amplitude and velocity of the stretch as previously suggested for the other stretches.



- Side lift stretch [3]: To add momentum to this stretch you can *step in front* of the kicking leg with the non-kicking leg.



- Side lift stretch [4]: Here is a front view of the side lift stretch. Your hips have a tendency to roll to the back and your trunk will lean forward, if you fight this tendency you will jam the neck of your thigh bone into the cartilage collar at the upper edge of the hip socket. If you have a *Coxa vara* (A bending of the neck of the femur), you could also jam the Greater Trochanter into your hip bone. So don't fight this tendency! You should also avoid leaning too far forward as well. Just do what feels most natural and work on increasing height and speed of lift.



- Outside - Inside swing [1]: This is a modified inside crescent kick. Your goal is to feel a stretch in your glutes, hips, and your trunk. Your goal *is not* to kick high. Start with your swinging leg behind you.



- Outside - Inside swing [2]: Bring the leg across as far as possible. I find you can get a better stretch from bringing it up a bit at first, then taking it across - rather than taking it across and up at the same time.



- Outside - Inside swing [3]: Your arms and trunk will naturally shift to accommodate the stretch, that is okay! Don't be stiff, be loose. Get that rear stretched and get the leg across. You can also bend the knee a bit and just knee over if you wish. Keeping your leg straight isn't essential - feeling a good stretch by getting that leg across is.



- Outside crescent kick [1]: Crescent kicks are arcing kicks included as staples in many martial arts. The outside crescent kick is done from a fixed position like so and relies heavily upon hip flexibility to generate power.



- Outside crescent kick [2]: Starting from a 45 degree angle across the body, begin by arcing the leg



up away from the centerline.



- Outside crescent kick [3] Turn your hips inward using an upper body torque to get the leg across. The outside of the foot is what contacts the striking area in an outside crescent kick. If you have nothing to strike, you must self select a visual target and bring your foot across this focal point.



- Outside crescent kick [4] Return the kick to the kicking position; Maintain a smooth, even motion.



- Outside crescent kick [5] The outside crescent is critical for trick, kicking combos. Hooks are also kicks of preference for chain combos, but the crescent kick is more applicable for basic flexibility development.



- Inside crescent kick [1] This kick is done from a fixed position with the kicking leg moving from outside your body and crossing in front of the centerline. It looks a lot like a curved front lift. For this example the kick will be done with the rear leg, so set the foot back in a makeshift backstance.



- Inside crescent kick [2] Starting from a 45 degree angle across the body, begin by arcing the leg up toward the centerline.



- Inside crescent kick [3] Keep the leg straight as you bring it up in a shaped arc. In the inside crescent, the bottom of the foot makes contact with the striking surface. If there is no target, pick a visual point and aim for it.



- Inside crescent kick [4] The inside crescent is not designed to return the kicking foot to its starting point. It will just be dropped down to your side.



- Inside crescent kick [5] This kick makes up a basic foundation for many crescent style kick tricks. Beginning with the simplistic tornado, and leading to all the 540 variations and 900 kicks. Work to increase the fluidness and speed of the kick.

### Trunk stretches:

Reaching the maximal range of motion in a workout for the trunk can take longer than the lower or upper body regions; It could take over 25 repetitious bends or twists in any direction to reach this maximal range. Developing it could take as many as 40-70 movements. For simple, 30 repetitions should suffice just fine. **[Novice take note:]** *There are both sitting and standing stretches presented here. I recommend working with the sitting variations before trying the major standing ones.* The standing variations can become ballistic stretches if poorly applied. Ballistic stretching = The bad.



- Sitting rotation [1]: Sit up straight with good posture and spread your legs out a little.



- Sitting rotation [2]: Keep your hips and legs immobile and twist from side to side, look in the direction of your twist. You can choose to do one side at a time, or alternate back and forth going side2side. You may choose to begin the first few repetitions keeping your head facing forward, simply turning your body back and forth gently in preparation of a greater stretch.



- Sitting side bend [1]: Begin this stretch in the same position as the sitting rotations with your hands behind your head. You will be bending down to the side.



- Sitting side bend [2]: DO NOT emphasize a hamstring stretch. In fact, I recommend keeping your knees slightly bent - this is a trunk stretch, not a hamstring bounce fest! Keep both elbows way back when doing this stretch, don't let them slouch inward.



- Sitting front bend [1]: Spread your legs far apart enough so your torso can go in between them, maintain a bend in the knee joint. Put your hands behind your head as pictured; Otherwise, if kept in the classic *Hands behind head : Hostage look*, your elbows will likely get in the way of the stretch.



- Sitting front bend [2]: A view from the front. Exhale on the way down and let your back round.



- Sitting front bend [3]: A view from the side.



- Laying backward bend [1]: Lay on your stomach. This is the starting position of this exercise.



- Laying backward bend [2]: Raise your trunk up using the muscles of your arms and back. Do not become static at the end of this exercise, let yourself drop back down as soon as you reach the end of the motion.



- Standing rotation [1]: YAY! Now we get to the standing trunk stretches. \*Ahem\* Spread your feet wider than shoulder width apart, keep good posture and look forward. This is the starting position of the exercise. It will work just like the sitting rotations.



- Standing rotation [2]: Begin gently twisting side to side. Look in the direction of your twist only after you are comfortable with the motion.



- Standing rotation [3]: **EMPHASIZE THE STRETCH - NOT THE MOTION.** Feel the pull on the abdominals as well as your lower back, do not *FLAIL* your arms wildly across - this stretch requires more of your attention because control is easily lost in the standing position, then safety becomes compromised. The last thing you want is a lower back injury from something silly like a trunk twist.





- Angled rotation [1]: There are many different angles to do this stretch, so there is nothing set in stone for an angled rotation except... BE CAREFUL!



- Angled rotation [2]: Simply twist at an angle one side at a time or side2side. It is wise to let your hips follow through on the stretch when increasing velocity or striving for greater amplitudes. Get creative on this stretch. When I do it, I like to imagine I'm turning for a trick like a sideswipe or a double leg.



- Standing side bends [1]: If you've never seen someone do this stretch you've lived a very sheltered life. Simply bend directly to one side, one arm coming over the top. Make sure this arm comes over your head parallel, meaning if you were to drop it, it would rest on the side of your head over the ear. The other arm usually has a tendency to rest on the upper leg or hip.



- Standing dips [1]: This stretch is a great extracurricular exercise for improving your butterfly twists. I find the best way to begin this exercise is to do a setup for a butterfly twist right before the dip and stop: This sets the position for your feet.



- Standing dips [2]: Now, regardless of your dip preference for the butterfly twist you should begin by dipping down low at the first knee.



- Standing dips [3]: Keep your chest close to your knees. Legs bent or not - your preference. It really depends on if you are doing this more for the stretch or for training of the move.



- Standing dips [4]: Now, to keep this from becoming ballistic come all the way up in one fluid motion. If you want to work for flexibility in the dip - consider keeping the legs straight and exaggerating the stretch. If you want to work more for butterfly twist training - consciously practice your dip and come out of the stretch with a jump or something.

## Upper body stretches:

Maximal range of motion per workout should be reached after only 5-10 arm swings in any given direction, this should be the minimum number per set. For anybody developing dynamic flexibility of the upper body, the total number per workout should be 30-40 for flexion-extension of the arm, and between 15-30 for circular swings or hang reaches. Most likely, you will only need a minimum of about 15 repetitions of any movement for maintenance.



- Single arm swings Swing one arm at a time, keeping the other motionless. Swing them in various directions with different upper body angles.



- Alternating arm swings Swing both arms at the same time in opposing directions.



- Bent arm swings Try swinging the arms bent at the elbow joint instead of straight. For example, by modifying the upward swing with the elbow bent, the triceps are receiving greater isolation than when the joint was extended.



- Arm swings to the side Here is an example of a swing with a different direction and body angle. This stretch really gets the lats in on some dynamic action!



- Arm circles This picture doesn't serve the stretch justice, but the arm is actually moving in clockwise and counter-clockwise circles in front of the body.



- Dual arm swings Arm swings with both arms moving together in the same direction.



- Chest and back pulls Pulling the arms back like this opens up the chest, giving it a wonderful stretch. By tossing them forward and caving the body in, we could stretch the back this way too.



- Flying bird Ummm yep. You can also turn the palms in different directions during swing stretches!

### Dynamic stretching videos

Would you like to see these slides in action? I've made videos for them! I will list them for you:

- [Front lift stretch](#)
- [Back lift stretch](#)
- [Side lift stretch](#)
- [Inside crescent kicks](#)
- [Outside crescent kick](#)
- [Outside-inside swing](#)
- [Upper body dynamic stretches](#)
- [Sitting dynamic twist stretches](#)
- [Standing dynamic twist stretches](#)

### A summary for dynamic flexibility training

Dynamic stretching will integrate beautifully into a tricking session. It will not take a long time to develop dynamic flexibility to desirable levels and as you continue applying it the volume needed to maintain these levels will become smaller. You should begin including it in your training as soon as possible, you won't be disappointed.

## Developing static passive flexibility

Ah. Here we go. Static passive flexibility, the ability to assume and maintain extended positions using external means (such as your own body weight, holding a position with assisting limbs, or a partner), is best developed through a combination of isometric stretching and relaxed stretching below the pain threshold.

**\*NOTE:** *Isometric stretching is also known as PNF [Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation] stretching.*

Passive flexibility usually exceeds both active static and active dynamic flexibility in the same joint. The greater this difference, the greater the possibility of increasing the amplitude of active movements.

### An overview of different static stretching methods

There are many ways to increase static passive flexibility. The three most commonly discussed stretching methods are isometric, relaxed, and ballistic. Let's compare the pros and cons of each method.

#### Isometric stretching

PROS:

- The fastest method of developing static passive flexibility.
- Improves active flexibility more than relaxed stretching.
- Improves strength in concentric, isometric, and eccentric actions.
- May cause longitudinal growth of muscle fibers.
- You don't have to do them very often!

CONS:

- Not for everyone. Not recommended for children or younger teenagers whose bones are still growing.
- Not recommended for those who are mostly sedentary.
- Can be harmful if strength training has been neglected or improperly applied.
- Can fatigue, and becomes more difficult when fatigued.
- More difficult to apply than other static stretching methods.

#### Relaxed stretching

PROS:

- Does not cause fatigue.
- Can be done anytime, even when you are fatigued or not warmed up.

- More relaxing than any other stretching method.
- Anybody can do them!

#### CONS:

- Takes a long time to reach the maximum flexibility limit per stretch.
- Progress is slow and takes more frequent applications to see results.
- Does not improve strength.

### Ballistic stretching

#### PROS:

- There... really are none.

#### CONS:

- A stretch cannot be adjusted or corrected once started.
- May result in immediate as well as residual pain.
- Fails to provide sufficient time for the tissues to adapt to a stretch.
- Aggravates and actually *encourages* a stronger stretch reflex response.

**\*A NOTE ON BALLISTIC STRETCHING:** Ballistic stretching involves bobbing, bouncing, rebounding, and rhythmic types of movement. Momentum becomes the driving force that moves the body or limb to forcibly increase the range of motion in this type of stretching. You've seen it before. It's the clown at the dojo or gym that sits in a stretched position bouncing up and down, up and down, up and down, getting seemingly nowhere in the stretch. We will not be discussing it any further.

### Test your static passive flexibility potential

Splits are a popular stretching benchmark and a great candidate for isometric stretching. Not everybody will be able to do the splits after correctly implementing these stretching methods. Do the following tests to determine if you have the potential to do the front and side splits.



- **Front split test** This is the deep lunge stretch, the knee of the front leg is flexed; Take note of the angle between the thighs, they should be able to form a 180 degree angle. If so, then your hips joints and their ligaments are not preventing you from doing the front split.



- **Side split test** Rest one leg on a structure like so... Keep your hips and your raised leg in a straight line. This is the half split position, if you can do it on both sides you have proved to yourself that your hip joints and their ligaments are not preventing you from doing the side split. There are no muscles that run from one leg to the other, if you can do this with both legs one at a time, why can't you do it with both legs at the same time? Huh? HUH?!

### The isometric stretching method in detail:

I recommend isometric stretching for the healthier, more active and well conditioned athletes out there.

*So what is this isometric stretching and how does it work?*

Basically, you add strong tensions during common static passive stretches, which evoke postcontractive relaxations and ultimately, increase the range of motion in a stretch. So, you pretty much just flex your muscles during a stretch - then follow that with an instant relax / increase combo. This puts the smack down on the stretch reflex and in turn, allows you to stretch further.

### Guidelines for isometric stretching

For increasing flexibility, isometric stretching should be done at least twice a week, at a maximum of about four times a week. For maintenance, it should only take one good application per week. The isometric method is best for those stretches that are stuck at a plateau, so I would only recommend using isometrics for those stretches that you really "need" greater mobility in. The splits are a good example of stretch that can easily plateau, isometrics work wonders for the splits.

Isometric stretching is not for everyone, to see if you are ready try it out! If you are consistently sore after every isometric application, if your flexibility is getting worse or not improving, or if you actually hurt something in the process of using it, you're not ready for isometric stretching! You are a wimp! Nah, but because isometric stretching involves the utilization of tension in extended positions, some people might not be prepared to employ them in their training; Moreover, it is usually not recommended for younger teens and children for this same reason. Depending on the strength of the muscle and the amount of stress the stretch causes, the damage from poor preparation can announce itself as muscle soreness or complete muscle tear! Finally, if nothing else, poor preparation will likely hinder results, meaning you could be wasting your time.

*Gawd! Something is wrong, cause I tried it and I've been sore for days! It's painful; But I want the splits, is it safe to continue?*

It's likely the lack of strength. You can try reapplying it and seeing if your body adapts overtime. If an injury has announced itself you're done for!

*How should I build strength for isometrics?*

Well first, strength is defined as *The force that a muscle or muscle group can exert against resistance*. So the most direct way is resistance training throughout a full range of motion: Like barbell squats through a full range, sprints through a full range, leg press in full ranges of motion; The keyword is strength throughout a full range of motion. However, there are more *all in one* alternatives such as martial arts, which can develop a whole slew of biomotor characteristics, such as speed, a little strength, coordination, and flexibility as well; Even endurance! A nice little package if I do say so myself. Gymnastics is another great *all in one* package. Tricking could build up strength too. But for *specifically* building strength, the best is direct resistance training. And as stated, resistance training throughout a full range of motion will provide the greatest benefit for isometric stretching.

### Isometric stretching in your training

Isometric stretching should be applied at the end of your tricking or training session. It should take between 10-25 minutes for most people, but it ultimately depends on how many isometric stretches you are including and your conditioning level. If you want to apply isometrics separate from a training session, include it after an extended warmup with some preliminary sets of strength movements: Preferably movements spanning a full range of motion.

### How to apply isometric stretching

Let's do a quick test, flex any muscle on your body. Go ahead. I'm not talking about a pose or a particular position, just tense a muscle. Tense a muscle group. Tense up! Come on sissy, grit your teeth and surface those muscle fibers! Steel wire! Steel wire! Okay, you understand. Constipation! Now, in isometric stretching, you will stretch to your maximal painless limit, just to the point of mild - moderate discomfort. Back off just slightly from this point. Okay, we're this far: Simply begin to tense up the regions under the stretch. Tense for about 5-7 seconds, gradually increasing the tension until about the third or fourth second when you reach your maximal tension. The last couple of seconds you make that shit CRAZY tight - like **Grunt and Grit** tight. WE ARE SOLID! Then release the tension and increase the stretch IMMEDIATELY. Don't wait to increase the stretch, the moment you let go of that built tension you drop slightly further. Relax. Repeat this process until you've reached your flexibility limit for this position. When you are at your max, create one last tension - this time holding it for about 30 seconds / You can even keep it tight for a minute or so if you desire. Come out of the stretch, rest for a few minutes, and repeat this process a couple more times for the best developmental results.

NOVICE AND THOSE NEW TO ISOMETRIC STRETCHING - PAY ATTENTION: Start with milder and shorter tensions just to experiment. Take it easy when beginning to get used to the process of it, then begin to increase intensity and duration until you find an optimal application method. You can repeat the entire stretch a couple times per workout.

ON FOCUS: Anytime you use isometric stretching you need to focus on the strength gains in the stretched position, not just the range of motion. Concentrate on tensing harder and/or longer. Put more weight on it, for example - support yourself in the position without the use of your hands. If you are doing splits, hold the position with your hands in some cool pose or something, not planted. In time it will result in some excellent gains.

Breathing: It's like lifting heavy weights: Inhale prior to tension - hold during tension to build pressure - exhale when tension is released and stretch is increased - calm and deep breaths in between tensions during relaxations. SIMPLE!

### The classic application: Isometric for splits

Ahh.. Here we go, the benchmark indicator for great lower body flexibility. While not the - end all be all - of great flexibility, it's nonetheless beneficial for increase in the static flexibility reserve for dynamic tricking movements; Not to mention it's impressive to those who cannot do them. Besides, some people just want to do them cause they are, well, THE SPLITS! The splits are a good candidate for isometric stretching too - so let's get on it!



- Isometric front splits [1] This will be a visual recap of applying isometric stretching with both the front and sidesplit stretches. Um. We are starting with the front splits, so get down with one knee in front.





- Isometric front splits [2] Assume the deep lunge position, make sure your back leg isn't sweeping too far towards the inside of your body and begin etching the front foot father and farther out. Take your time to get situated comfortably.



- Isometric front splits [3] The splits mostly target the hip flexors of the back leg and the hamstrings of the front leg. You can precede the split position by holding the previous deep lunge and this hamstring stretch for a small duration of time prior to entering the split position.



- Isometric front splits [4] Raise and support yourself in this position, getting ready to lower into the split.



- Isometric front splits [5] Lower down slowly until you find your discomfort point. Let's imagine this is as far as I could go before the discomfort became to great to continue the stretch.



- Isometric front splits [6] Now, back off slightly from your discomfort zone. This is a more comfortable amplitude. Begin gradually increasing tension of the stretched muscles. Note: FLEX YOUR LEG MUSCLES! Imagine as if your legs are going to sandwich the floor, start to grit and tense up like crazy. TENSE TENSE TENSE TENSE TENSE! And...



- Isometric front splits [7] Release tension immediately and...



- Isometric front splits [8] Increase the stretch. BINGO! After backing off from the discomfort zone, tensing like crazy, and releasing the tension we immediately increase the stretch and relax.



- Isometric front splits [9] Repeat this process until you reach your maximal range of motion. At the maximum, tense up for a longer period of time; Such as thirty seconds, a minute, or a little more. When you are done, rise, rest, and repeat if needed. NO RINSING, ISOMETRICS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH WASHING HAIR!



- Isometric side splits [1] My favorite method of increasing amplitude in a sidesplit stretch requires the use of a chair. We will be using it to keep our hip alignment in check during the stretch.



- Isometric side splits [2] WRONG! Do not push your butt back.



- Isometric side splits [3] WRONG! Do not lay forward.



- Isometric side splits [4] RIGHT! Keep your back upright and your pelvis tilted forward. HIPS FORWARD! Do not let you butt sag back on an upright sidesplit stretch.



- Isometric side splits [5] Notice how the ankles, knees, and hips are in a straight line. Do you understand the correct sidesplit position now? Good.



- Isometric side splits [6] Now, continue using the chair if you desire, but for illustrational purposes I will go back to this view. Maintain the position we had with our hips right up on the chair with the back upright and ankles, knees, and hips in a straight line. Just like before, after finding our discomfort point, we back off and apply tension.



- Isometric side splits [7] Upon releasing tension, we immediately increase the stretch and relax. (I have a bug on my shoulder)



- Isometric side splits [8] As mentioned, this is the final position and we will be holding a longer tension.

## The relaxed stretching method in detail:

What is left for us in this life after isometric stretching? Well, we have relaxed stretching, another way to develop static passive flexibility. Basically, you just don't tense up when you assume the stretched position. You focus on total relaxation, the complete opposite of tension, as a means of increasing the stretch (Hence the name - relaxed stretching). It isn't as effective as isometric stretching because your strength is not being simultaneously developed or applied, but it does have two advantageous characteristics: You can do them whenever you want without a warmup and they do not fatigue. Also, they are great for days in between isometrics (because you cannot do isometric stretching everyday) and great at the end of your workout for returning muscle lengths to their pre-training lengths to enhance recovery.

*Wait, I have a question! If isometrics are so much better for flexibility development, why even bother using relaxed stretching at all?*

Well, I just answered this above Mr. Eggplant, but still a good question for those who didn't catch it. Isometric stretching is taxing, should be treated as a form of strength development, and should only be done a couple days a week. To augment your rate of progression, you can include a variety of relaxed stretches in between bouts of isometrics. Doing both is the best idea! Besides, not every static-passive stretch can be applied with the isometric method.

## Guidelines for relaxed stretching

Relaxive stretching should be done as the opposite of isometric stretching. Assume positions that let you relax all your muscles, put as little weight on them as possible. Utilize deep, calm breaths and think about pleasant things... Like me running through a wildflower field naked. Relaxive stretches are slow, so when you reach your painless limit of discomfort, patiently wait and continue thinking about me running through a wildflower field naked. After a while you will slide into a new level of the stretch. It can take several minutes, but when you reach your maximal stretch - hold this position for thirty seconds. You can maintain this position for a few minutes, but this may not provide additional benefit compared to the simple 30 seconds. Now get out of the stretch slowly.

"Cool, how often should I do this per day?"

Well, as often as you would like. However, following this procedure more than once a day will not likely provide additional benefit.

"How about per week?"

This is the major drawback of the relaxed stretching method. It takes frequent applications, usually 5-7 days a week to see gains. For the splits, I would work each split ten minutes per day after a warmup, or as long as it takes to reach your maximal painless limit of motion without tension. Once reached, you'll benefit most from a 30 second hold. It takes more time, but it still works.

## Relaxed stretching in your training

Relaxive stretches should be done at the end of a training session if you wish to include them into your workout, but as mentioned - you can do them anytime you want. If isometrics are applied, you should do relaxive stretches AFTER the isometric stretching. If your goal is to increase flexibility, doing them before the final cooldown is recommended. If your goal is simply to relax your muscles and enhance recovery, I would do them following your final cooldown. Always, after finishing relaxive stretches, walk around for a minute or two.

## The expansive index of static stretches!

I DO NOT RECOMMEND: Doing all of these stretches! It's too much, and the excess will not benefit you. The variety is for it's own sake - existing to give you more freedom in finding those preferred exercises for your own benefit. Just pick what you need and do those stretches only. Do not bother to go out and do every one of these stretches.

**[ABOUT THE FORMAT]** Just going down the list, pick some stretches from each section. The naming schema is based upon what's popular or what muscular regions the stretches are targeting.

Here is a small list of things you might need:



- Some space! You'll need some space to stretch. Stretching in the confines of your bathroom is not a good idea! So pick a large room or an open field. Word of caution though: If you are stretching bare skinned on a field during summer, chiggers and other malicious pests will annihilate you. Lay on a towel or picnic blanket. Yeah, the demonstration stretches provided here were truly painful. The lying and split stretches **-WHEEEW-**, my back and inner legs were torn apart; I had the itches and hivey bumps for days! DAMN YOU TINY INSECTS! DAMN YOU!



- Variable structures Some stretches require a high platform. Bleachers are a good choice for a lot of stretches.



- A wall A wall is perfect for leaning stretches. Most of the time a pole or a pillar like structure can work just as well, but a wall is good.



- Pillar structure Some stretches require you to grasp and pull. An edge of a wall or corner should work great, so do trees, sign posts, etc.



- A chair A lot of the stretches presented here require a seated position. Everybody has a chair, you're most likely sitting in one right now!



- A stick or rod There are a lot of stretches you can do with a stick/rod/pipe/etc. I don't present many here, but it's a useful tool nonetheless. Give it a try.



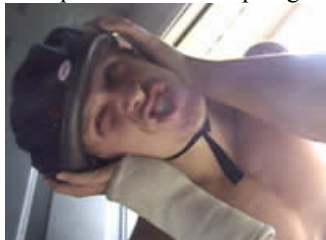
- Theraband or towel A theraband is just stretchy material, but a towel will do just fine. These are usually used in stretches that require a wrapping of a limb followed by a pull.



Ummm... Here are some things you **DO NOT** need.



- A stretching machineNo, you do not need a stretching machine. Just consider it's value for a moment. What is the logic behind paying a ton of money for a machine that can only provide one stretch position? The machine will only let you decrease or increase amplitude based on how far you turn the crank, that's not very safe. The machine doesn't even provide correct hip alignment for normal sidesplits. What a waste of money, space, and time! Skip them, they're crap!



- A bicycle helmetYou do not need a bicycle helmet when stretching for obvious reasons.

## Lower body

### Feet and ankles



- Plantar arch [1]If you can do this stretch and take care of business on the toilet at the same time, you are one step ahead of everybody else who's ever stretched or used the toilet. Ever. Simply cross one leg and rest it on your opposite knee. Grasp your ankle in one hand, trapping it: Grab the underside of your toes and the ball of your foot with your other hand. Now just pull your toes towards your shins. Feel the stretch on the bottom of your foot. Don't intentionally flex your foot towards your shins, just pull the toes. It can be hard to feel the stretch, but focus on the big toe first to understand the feel then get all the cute piggies to help get that sole cleansed (erh, stretched). This is a rather mild stretch.



- Plantar arch [2]Wow. Pex. Yes. This stretch is great for those who like to be on all fours and take it up the... Just get your toes underneath you and lower your rear backward and downward. This is another sole stretch, so feel it on the bottom of your feet.



- Plantar arch [3]For those who can't sit and don't have a wall or support - here we go! Just stand a few steps from the support, bend the knees and raise your rear heel off the floor. Shift your weight onto the ball of that foot by pressing downward, feel the stretch on the bottom of the foot (Plantar's nuts, I mean arch).



- Plantar arch [4]NOW! For all of you without something to sit or lean on, we have a stretch just for you! It doesn't even require you to lean on all fours and worship the plantar arch god. We have a stretch here that let's us keep our dignity and job. Just stand with one leg slightly in front of the other bent. Shift your weight onto the ball of your forward foot and



press downward. Yes, this is for the sole of the foot!



- Anterior foot and toes [1] Sitting on the can again, or office chair... Cross one leg over the opposite knee, grasp the ankle with one hand and the top of the foot with the other hand. Pull the bottom of your toes towards the ball of your foot. Really press em down and feel the top of your foot go *Ah! I'm being stretched*. You're welcome Mr.Toppofoot... You are welcome.



- Anterior foot and toes [2] Stand. One leg slightly in front of the other. The tops of the toes touching the ground, shift your weight forward and press downward on top of said toes. Feel the stretch on the top of the foot.

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### Lower legs



- Anterior and lateral lower leg [1] You've probably done this one a lot without even thinking about it. Simply turn your feet under so the top outside portion rests on the floor. Turn your ankle upward and press your feet downward. You can also do this one foot at a time for a deeper stretch. Wait... AHHHHH!!! What happened to my pants?! - Nevermind that - AHHHHHH!!! What happened to my leg hair?!!



- Anterior and lateral lower leg [2] Sit down! On the floor! Bend one knee and rest the sole of that foot on your inner thigh, just relax it. Grab hold of the foot of the extended leg and invert your ankle, pushing the heel out and turning your foot inside. You should feel this stretch the outer portion of your lateral lower leg. Move the foot around at different inside angles to get a greater stretch.



- Anterior and lateral lower leg [3] Just like the stretch we just did, except both legs are stretched at once.



- Anterior and lateral lower leg [4] Stand about two steps from some type of structure you can lean on, like a wall or pole. Lean over, support yourself on this structure with your hands. Shifting your hips backwards so your upper body forms about a 90 degree angle with your legs, balance on your heels and stretch the outer portions of the lower legs by turning your feet inside. You might have to move around a bit to see exactly where you get the best stretch. This can also stretch the muscles behind the knee.



- Anterior and lateral lower leg [5] This stretch is essential for arcade-style fighting game bouts in front of the big screen television! My brother has excellent flexibility in his shins only because he sits like this with the arcade pad in his lap when playing fighting games. To do it, just kneel with your toes pointing behind you. Sit on your heels and adjust your weight for maximum shin stretchage! To increase the stretch, grab your toes and pull them upward. WOW!



- Achilles Tendon and posterior lower leg [1] This is a pretty cool stretch, it doesn't even look like a stretch! While kneeling, shift one foot slightly forward; Keeping it flat so the whole foot remains in contact with the floor, shift yourself forward so the forward knee goes past the toes of the flat foot.



- Achilles Tendon and posterior lower leg [2] Place one leg in front of you and the other one nearly underneath you. Keep your rear foot's toes pointing forward, and it's heel firmly planted on the floor. Bend the knee of the rear leg, lowering the hips, shift your weight on top of this leg placing the stretch on the lower leg. I'm holding onto something, but it's not necessarily needed.



- Achilles Tendon and posterior lower leg [3] I'm sure everybody has done some form of this stretch. Most of the time it's preferred to extend farther out, but I'm presenting it here with the hands closer to the feet. You can modify this stretch by stretching both legs at once or resting on your elbows, but basically you slowly lower your heel or heels to the floor with the stretched leg straight.



- Achilles Tendon and posterior lower leg [4] Lean forward against a support with one leg bent forward and the opposite leg extended straight. Get your head, neck, pelvis, rear leg, and ankle all into a straight line. Bend your arms and shift your weight forward by leaning into the support. Flex the forward knee and keep the rear leg's toes pointing forward and its heel flat on the floor.



- Achilles Tendon and posterior lower leg [5] Damn, we've all done this one. So easy. Just stand with the balls of your feet on an edge and lower your heels to the floor. Use something for support if you need to.



- Behind the knees [1] Sit on the floor and bend the one knee, resting the sole of that foot on your inner thigh. Grab the foot of the extended leg, keeping that leg straight, pull your foot towards the torso. You should feel the stretch directly behind your knee as well as slightly lower. Your heel should rise off the ground a little while your leg remains slabbed on the floor like a giant piece of human meat.



- Behind the knees [2] You'll need a towel or theraband for this one. Sit, cross one leg and place the heel on top of the opposite knee. Hook the ball of the extended foot with your wipecy and hold onto it with both hands. PULL IT TOWARDS YOU! ENSARE THE FOOT! EAT IT! EAT IT! Feel the stretch behind your knee. You can also do this with both feet hooked together.



- Behind the knees [3] This works the same as the stretch we just did. Lie on your back and leave one leg extended. Keep your back and head flat on the ground. Keep your hips squared. Raise one leg over your chest - keeping the knee locked, hook the wipecy around the ball of the extended foot and pull your toes towards you. *Voila!*

## Hamstrings



- Hamstrings [1] The most popular hamstring stretch and the preferred choice for the lazy slackers who bumble into the gym and start their laughable warmup with static stretching. Sit with one leg straight. The other leg is bent at the knee with the heel resting against the inside of the opposite thigh; This thigh and it's calf should remain lowered to the floor. Keeping the extended leg straight, lower your upper torso onto the thigh. Try reaching for your toes, or smothering your palms on the bottom of the extended foot. Lower that face onto the leg man! Look at how pathetic I am... tsk tsk..



- Hamstrings [2] Sit DOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOWN! Both legs are spread and extended. Keeping your legs straight, extend your upper back by bending forward at the hips. Lower your chest to the floor. This also stretches the lower back!



- Hamstrings [3] The previous stretch with emphasis on a single side. ISOLAT + ION!





- Hamstrings [4] A standing variation of the previous stretch. Stand with your legs spread and bend at the hips. Keep your legs straight! Grasp your ankles or feet and pull your chest closer to your legs. You may also choose to stretch on either side, one leg at a time individually for great isolation.



- Hamstrings [5] The ISOLAT + ION of one side of the previous stretch.



- Hamstrings [6] A favorite hamstring stretch for contemporary team sport athletes, who also bumble into the gym and start their laughable warmup with static stretching. BAH! Lie on your back with one leg flexed at the knee, its heel near the rear. Extend the leg ready for a stretch, grab it, and pull it towards your face. Keep this leg straight, knee locked. Oh, and keep your other foot flat on the ground.



- Hamstrings [7] Wipey! Lay down like the lay down dog you are! Wrap the towel or theraband (or whatever you got) around the instep of the extended leg's foot. The other leg is straight, resting on the floor. Pull the raised leg towards your face with the wipey. Keep the leg straight, knee locked, you know the drill. Hamstring stretch!



- Hamstrings [8] Well, I here I am. My dignity has been stomped... This is one of the most feminine stretches ever and I'm here demonstrating it \*sob\*. Sit on the floor with one hand behind your hips for support, the other leg is extended in front of you. Grasp the in-step of the other foot, it's leg bent to begin with. Then extend your leg until it is straight, perpendicular to the floor.



- Hamstrings [9] Another popular hamstring stretch. A great choice for relaxed stretching during those times you just want to loosen the hams a bit at work by propping your leg on top of anything in sight. Just place the foot on top of something. Keeping both legs straight, bend at the hips and lower your trunk onto your raised thigh.



- Hamstrings [10] Just like the stretch before it, except developed into a martial arts esque split. The

only difference is I have slid the rear foot farther back and rotated the base foot towards the outside of my body. It looks pretty cool, no? It's also stretching the adductors and hip flexors of the base leg by the way...



- Hamstrings [11] A particularly torturous stretch, I find this excellent for developing advanced hamstring flexibility. Stand with your right foot about a foot (30 centimeters) in front of your rear foot. Foot, foot, foot and foot. Foot. Foot. Foot. Foot, foot; Foot and foot, foot. Yeah, now lean forward and bend at the hips, try to touch the floor or your right foot with your hands. Keep both legs super straight! HAHAAHAHAHA!



- Hamstrings [12] Warning: Weirdo stretch, weirdo stretch! Squat with your feet flat on the floor, then extend one leg while placing your weight on the one left bent. BUTT ON FLOOR. Grasp both ankles with their corresponding hands, then lower your whole upper torso to the extended leg's thigh. This stretch also gets some groin action. Yep, groin action. You betcha. Groin action is great.



- Hamstrings [13] Another evil stretch, this one hits a lot of areas in just the right way (wrong way for some folks, eiiiyahhh!!!). Extend your legs in front of you while sitting on the floor. Now, keep your legs very straight. Extend your upper back, bend forward at the hips, and lower your trunk onto your thighs to feel the stretch work its magic. Oh, and yeah it stretches all sorts of little muscles all the way up to the lower back - and it stretches the lower back itself.



- Hamstrings [14] A standing variation of the previous stretch. Legs together, stand up straight! Now, bend forward at the hips, lower your trunk toward your thighs, and grasp the backs of your ankles. Squeeze your upper torso to your thighs! YEAH! You can also place your hands on the floor. There is another way to enter this stretch too. You would squat with your heels flat, your chest already on your thighs, and your hands down low. Then you would slowly straighten your knees. This is pure evil.



- Hamstrings [15] Now we've come to the front splits. Finally... For a slide by slide pictorial demonstration on how to enter this split, go read the section [Isometric for splits](#).

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## Adductors



- Adductors [1] The butterfly stretch, as it's commonly called. Sit on the ground and bring your heels together. Grasp your feet or ankles and pull them as close to your groin as you can. At this point in the stretch you can either place



your elbows on your inner thighs or knees, and push your legs to the floor; Or, you can keep your elbows off your thighs and lean forward. In this picture I am pushing my thighs down with my elbows. If you choose to do it this way keep good posture (back straight up).



- Adductors [2]A variation of the butterfly that's floated into *Men's health magazine* articles on a number of occasions, announcing it's ability to make sex greater, boost conception chances, and prevent cancer. Whatever... Just lie on your back and bend your knees, bring the heels together like on an upright butterfly and pull your feet towards your rear. Spread your knees as wide as possible, focus more on bringing the thigh to the ground instead of the knees alone.



- Adductors [3]Well, we've reached a dead end. In any case, you'll need a dead end or a wall to do this stretch. This is one of the BEST adductor stretches for relaxed stretching. You can seemingly sit in this stretch all day and be amazed at what gravity and patience can do to your amplitude. So, just lie down on your back with your legs raised up. You want your rear and heels on the wall. Spread your legs apart! YES! You can place your hands on the insides of your knees to increase the stretch manually.



- Adductors [4]The great revealer of secrets. All details inside. Squat with your feet flat on the ground about a foot apart (30 centimeters). Turn your toes slightly outward and place your elbows on your thighs. Finally, push your legs outward with your elbows and show us your secrets! Note: You can still push out with your elbows and conceal your groin by strategic positioning of your hands. I choose not to, only to piss you off. Females: Hi, what's up?



- Adductors [5]Similar to the previous stretch, something Spike might like doing one day on the can. Spread your legs a little wider than hip width apart, keep your feet flat on the floor. Point your toes outward and try to form a 180 degree angle with the heels facing each other. Now, just place your hands on knees, bend at the hips, and lower your chest toward the floor while keeping your back flat. Use your hands to push your legs outward and feel the fun begin.



- Adductors [6]Big Dallas once said I looked like a frog sprawled on a dissection pan when doing this stretch. Someone else took a double take, thinking I was doing something naughty at first. Nonetheless, this is my favorite pre sidesplit stretch because it ends up being a straddle split with knees bent. Kneel down, your toes pointing out to the sides and your elbows resting on the floor; Spread your knees as far as possible. If you want to try a variation, lower your chest towards the ground and extend your arms out forward. In any variation, keep your knees and hips in a straight line, meaning: Keep your butt back.



- Adductors [7]This is like a martial arts split pre lunge thingy. It's like a forward lunge except it

stretches your adductors. How? Spread your feet apart into a front stance. Now just turn your rear foot outwards 90 degrees and lean forward! Keep both feet in line as your press down that right hip. YEAH!



- Adductors [8]A variation of the previous stretch, except we need something to place our front foot upon. Slide the rear leg backward, the rear foot pointing outward 90 degrees just like before. Keep your balance and put some weight on that rear hip, feeling the stretch in the adductors of the base leg.



- Adductors [9]I swear, this stretch just seems odd to me, but it works. Find a suitable chair, preferably one that doesn't have a digestive tract. Place one foot on the seat of this non-carnivorous chair, bend at the lower back and drop your hands to the ground.



- Adductors [10]HOLY HIGH BRIGHTNESS BATMAN! Well, this is actually a post sidesplit type stretch. It's the toes upward sidesplit. Anyway, just sit down and extend your legs. Then spread them while keeping your torso and toes up. Yeah, I hope you didn't get your hopes up.



- Adductors [11]More information about entering the sidesplit can be found in the [Isometric for splits](#) section. As described earlier: Feet, knees, and hips all in a straight line. Your pelvis is pushed forward and good posture is maintained.



- Adductors [12]A back view. The toes stay pointing forward throughout the stretch.



- Adductors [13]In the final position, the soles of the feet are usually flattened on the floor. This is what a final sidesplit should look like.



- Quadriceps [1] Duhhhhhhh, hello everybody! Lie face down, bend one knee and grab the ankle visiting your rear with the adjacent hand. Pull your heel towards your buttocks and imagine pulling your tailbone between your legs: Meaning your pelvis needs to rotate backwards. However, do not arch your lower back. Your legs should be touching and hips squared! Feel the squeeze in the quad.



- Quadriceps [2] Just like the stretch we previously discussed, except lying on the side with legs touching. Bend your knee back and grasp that ankle! Pull your heel toward your rear: And just as before, no back arching or pelvis twisting; But, still imagine pulling your tailbone between your legs as it rotates backward.



- Quadriceps [3] The classic, standing quadriceps stretch. Now, there are two ways to do this. You can hold onto the foot of the stretching leg with the adjacent hand or cross and hold with the opposing hand. It's your choice. Personally, I prefer crossing with the opposing hand. If you hold onto the stretch with the same side setup, keep your base leg straight, the medial sides of the legs in contact with each other, and imagine pulling your tailbone between your legs by pushing your pelvis backward: Without arching the lower back or twisting the pelvis.



- Quadriceps [4] Like the previous stretch except with a cross setup. Remember to focus on maximally stretching the quadriceps.



- Quadriceps [5] Neat stretch, if I do say so myself. Just place the top of one foot onto a support structure and start dipping down by bending the support leg. Keep your legs close, rotate the pelvis backwards without twisting it, and don't arch your lower back.



- Quadriceps [6] Sit, bend one leg behind you keeping the inside of its knee and thigh in contact with the floor while the foot points behind you. Lean back at an angle that gives the greatest stretch. If possible, lean back until you are flat on your back without arching the back. Squeeze your butt cheeks together and lift your hips off the floor to increase the stretch.



- Quadriceps [7] Squat down and assume the position. Grab your back foot and pull your heel toward your rear. Maintain parallel alignment between your hips, knees, and feet of both legs. Do not arch the lower back, twist the pelvis, or place excessive weight on the knee resting on the floor. You might need to support yourself with something on this stretch.



- Quadriceps [8] Kneel with your knees touching each other and the toes pointing backward. Lean backward, supporting yourself with your arms, and squeeze your glutes pushing your hips forward. Do not allow your knees to rise off the floor. Now, as for a small amount of controversy: Is it okay to allow your knees to spread outward? Some say, NO! Others say, SURE! I say, try and see for yourself which you like. I've done it with my knees spread for years - never a problem.



- Quadriceps [9] The advancement of the previous quad stretch. You first lean back on your elbows, then on your back - minimizing back arch. Remember again to keep your knees from rising off the floor, this is more of a problem when the knees are near each other as opposed to when they are spread outward.



- Quadriceps [10] The final development of the previous two stretches. Keep your knees from rising and try your best to minimize back arch.

## Hips and Glutes



- Hips and glutes [1] This is the standing front lunge stretch. With your feet shoulder width apart and toes pointing forward, take a deep step forward locking out the back knee. Do not let the front knee go past it's ankle, if this is happening step further out. Drop your weight down slightly and feel the hip flexor of the rear leg stretch as well as the upper thigh of the front leg. Great stretch.



- Hips and glutes [2] Staple stretch! We have staples in our diet like oatmeal. We have staples in our tricking like the 540 kick. And we have staples in our stretching, like this stretch. This is also part of the pre front splits series of stretches. Bend one knee in the front and the opposite knee behind you on the floor. Roll your back foot under so the top of it rests against the ground. DO NOT let your front knee bend past it's ankle. The front ankle should always form a 90 degree angle with its knee or be further than the knee. Feel the quality of a premium hip stretch!





- Hips and glutes [3]GREAT GODS OF GLUTES! [3G]Tormentor. Look guys! I'm on a clan! ∴ [3G]∴.T0rm3nt0r! I'm so 1337! No. No. Please no... Anyway: Lie on your back and bend one knee, pull it across the body to the floor. Keep your elbows, head, and shoulders flat on the floor.



- Hips and glutes [4]Like the previous stretch, except your leg is extended! Remember to keep your elbows, head, and shoulders flat on the floor.



- Hips and glutes [5]Now we've reached the beginning of the toad series of stretches. A bunch of gnarled up legs. Toad. Lie down on your backside, knees bent, and hands underneath your head. Hook one leg OVER the other, use this same leg that's over the other to force the inside of the bottom leg to the floor. And yeah, keep your elbows, head, and shoulders flat on the floor.



- Hips and glutes [6]DIE! Bend both knees and place one ankle over the other's knee. The leg underneath will push the leg on top of it toward your face. Feel the ass fibers elasticizing! Keep your head, shoulders, and back flat on the floor. Yep.



- Hips and glutes [7]Lay down and extend your arms to the sides. Keeping your elbows, head, and shoulders firmly flat on the floor: Bend your knees together on one side.



- Hips and glutes [8]Just like the previous stretch with both legs extended! These stretches will likely stretch your lower torso a bit too.



- Hips and glutes [9]Sit down and cross one leg over the other. The leg that crosses over - yep - slide it's heel TOWARDS your rear. Now, turn over and place your opposite elbow on the bent knee. Look over your shoulder, turning your trunk and pushing the knee with this renegade elbow!





- Hips and glutes [10] Just like the previous stretch except the base knee is bent.



- Hips and glutes [11] DOWN! Bring one leg up bent, pulling it's foot to your opposite shoulder with one hand and keeping the other hand on it's knee. Keep your shoulders and back flat on the floor - you may bring up your head.



- Hips and glutes [12] Just like the previous stretch, except pull the foot down towards the other side instead of the other shoulder. You will likely need to pull much harder on the knee to get the optimal stretch.



- Hips and glutes [13] This is an upright variation of the previous stretch, so keep the back straight! Hook your knee with the same side elbow and grasp your ankle with the opposing hand. Pull your foot to the opposite shoulder.



- Hips and glutes [14] This is a standing variation of a previous stretch. Bring one knee straight up, and pull it's foot and the knee itself into your body. Feel the stretch pulling the glute muscles. Hope your balance isn't shoddy.



- Hips and glutes [15] Cross one knee over the other while sitting on the ground. Now just lean forward without rounding the back. Pretty cool eh?



- Hips and glutes [16] One of my personal favorites. Find a seat and place one leg over the other's knee. Keep the knee on top parallel with the ground and lean forward, resting your weight on the medial part of that leg.



- Hips and glutes [17]TOADRIC! Bend one leg so it's foot points to the opposite side. Cross the other leg over the front of this leg, keeping it's foot flat on the floor. Bend your upper torso forward, and try to set your head on the bottom knee.



- Hips and glutes [18]Place your outer thigh, calf, and ankle on the surface of a structure. Lean forward to stretch if you are distanced from the object.



- Hips and glutes [19]You can also bend the base leg and approach closer to the platform for a different feel on this stretch



- Hips and glutes [20]A seated variation of the previous two stretches. It stretches the same. Sit and cross one leg over the other's knee. Push the crossing leg's knee down and bend forward. The leg resting on top should be parallel with the floor.



- Hips and glutes [21]This is like, zen shit right here. Place both your feet as high as possible on the opposite thighs, turning the soles of your feet upward. The higher you place the feet, the greater the stretch.



- Hips and glutes [22]Stand and cross one leg over the other at the knee. Bend your knees and push your rear out to the side, feeling the stretch in the... rear.. hah! You can also increase the distance the crossing leg adducts as another means of increasing the stretch.



- Hips and glutes [23]Like the previous stretch without the cross. Simply bend the knees slightly and push one glute out to the side until you feel the stretch. You might have to straighten the knee of the side being stretched.

## Upper body

### Lower torso



- Lower torso [1] Let's start this with a bang! A COBRA mustang! I mean. Cobra stretch? Lay flat on your belly, place your hands facing forward on the floor by your hips and press down while raising your head and trunk. Arch your back and squeeze the glutes to prevent excessive compression of the lower spine. Oh man, A1 Abdominal stretchage!



- Lower torso [2] Kneel with your legs slightly apart and parallel to each other. Arch your back while squeezing the glutes and push your hips forward. Slide your hands onto your heels and push it out! This will also stretch your shoulders.



- Lower torso [3] Don't overdo this stretch, please. AMBULANCE! AMBULANCE! AMBULANCE! Spread your feet about three feet apart (a meter) and place your hands on your hips. Squeeze the glutes and push your hips forward as you arch backwards. Slide your hands down as you increase the amplitude of the stretch. WARNING: Again, be careful while performing this stretch - and come out of it slowly!



- Lower torso [4] This is like the hamster in the roll ball stretch. Rocking chair? Half moon? Just lie face down and bend your knees back. Grab a hold of both ankles with your hands and lift your chest and knees off the floor while contracting your buttocks muscles. Some yoga practitioners can do this resting the soles of their feet on their head.



- Lower torso [5] Beginners bridge: Bridging for dummies. Lie on your back with your heels close to your hips. Set your hands on the floor next to your neck like you are going to do a kip up with your fingers pointing toward your feet. Raise your trunk up and rest your forehead on the floor.



- Lower torso [6] Just like the bridge previous to this bridge, except you will raise one arm at a time and place your forearms on the floor.



- Lower torso [7]ADVANCED DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS BRIDGE! Same as the previous bridges, except you raise yourself until your wrists are parallel with your shoulders. Push your armpits out, keep your head in, and close the gap between hands and feet while keeping your knees and arms straight.



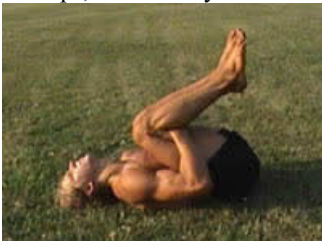
- Lower torso [8]MEOW! Kneel like an animal with the toes pointing behind you. Round your back. Feel the OPTIMAL stretch. Yes, OPTIMAL.



- Lower torso [9]Here is an example of a stick stretch! YAY! This stretch works the same as the previous stretch except you will hold onto a stick that is hooked behind your knee.



- Lower torso [10]The slump in chair stretch. While seated on something extend your torso, bend at the hips, and lower your stomach BETWEEN your thighs.



- Lower torso [11]This is the most popular stretch for people nearly falling apart. Just lie on your back, grab behind your thighs - NOT IN FRONT - and pull your knees toward your chest and shoulders. Elevate your hips off the floor.



- Lower torso [12]Raise your legs up in a squat position so your knees almost rest on your forehead. Support the weight of your hips with your hands. This also stretches your neck; However, avoid excessively bending the neck.



- Lower torso [13]This is cool stuff isn't it! Raise your legs to a vertical position. Support yourself by placing your hands on the lower back. Now, keep the legs straight and spread apart while lowering the feet to the floor. You can also do this with your feet together. Once again, this stretches the neck so avoid crushing it. Oh - and this can stretch the hamstrings too.





- Lower torso [14] The same as the previous stretch except with the legs together.



- Lower torso [15] Yes, this chair stretch is great for you kids still in school, or you poor peeps with a desk job. Just sit up straight in your chair and turn to one side by use of your hands. Pull your leading elbow into your body. Keep your feet flat on the floor and rear in the seat.



- Lower torso [16] Side bends, NON DYNAMIC THIS TIME. Just spread your legs, hands behind your head with the ELBOWS BACK, and bend your upper torso to the side from the hip. THIS IS NOT A HAMSTRING STRETCH - stretch your sides. If you have to, keep a very subtle bend in the knees to prevent your hams from getting missiled. You can even sit with your legs crossed if you wish.



- Lower torso [17] The previous stretch with one arm resting on the adjacent leg and the other reaching over the top.



- Lower torso [18] Kneel and extend one leg to the side with the toes pointing to the side too. Raise your arms sideways and bend to the extended leg from the hip. The corresponding hand rests on the extended foot and the other hand says *Hi, how are you?* as it reaches over the ear.



- Lower torso [19] Pee in your pants. Actually, just bend over with the legs relatively straight and imagine pushing out behind you with the lower back.



- Lower torso [20] GOOD MORNING NEIGHBOR! Stand with your feet slightly apart and interlock your hands overhead. Then drop to one side. Keep your shoulders in contact with your ears while you do this, like a skull sandwich.



## Upper back



- Upper back [1]OH YOU SNAKE IN THE GRASS! Anyway, kneel on all fours while extending your arms forward. To properly feel the stretch press your elbows and forearms hard against the ground while the chest lowers. It could help to bring your knees closer up.



- Upper back [2]Easy. Sit and wrap your arms behind your knees, then lean forward and pull back while keeping your arms tight.



- Upper back [3]A classic lat stretch. Grab hold of a sturdy object below hip height. Take a step back and drop your rear while you hold on. Feel the stretch isolate on one side of the back (lat) and continue to pull. You can even push away with your legs to further increase the intensity of the stretch.

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## Neck



- Neck [1]This is like a tragic crunch! Lie on your back with both knees bent. Place your hands behind your head and pull your chin towards your chest. That's all there is to it!



- Neck [2]Interlock your hands behind your head and pull forward. Rest your chin on your chest and keep your shoulders depressed.



- Neck [3]The body boner! Simply extend your legs vertically and support the position by placing your hands on your lower back.



- Neck [4] It just keeps getting better doesn't it? Well, start in the position from the previous stretch and slowly lower your knees to a resting position beside your head. Bring your chin to your chest by pulling the thighs in with the hands. Your knees and shins should rest on the floor.



- Neck [5] Here's a great stretch for the lateral neck. Get a chair and grasp the edge of the seat with one hand - hold tight. Place your other hand on the opposite side of your head and pull it towards that side. This stretch can also be done standing, although I find it less effective.



- Neck [6] Place both arms behind the back with one grasping behind the elbow of the other. Now, just lower your head toward the GRASPING arms side. Cool huh? This also stretches the posterior shoulder region. If you are bald, you will look cool doing this stretch.



- Neck [7] Finally, a stretch for the anterior neck. Just lean your head back and gently pull backward. Great stretch for sword swallowers... And sword swallowing tricksters.



- Neck [8] This stretch is another logic point for those twisting tricks; Because looking over your shoulder is an important part of twisting! Just push the neck to the side... I hope I don't have to tell you to gently push the neck instead of driving it.

## Pectorals



- Pectorals [1] For my first pectoral stretch, I will need a chair from the audience! Okay, you will need the top of the chair at mid chest level. If your chair is too high - fix it - or find another stretch. Simply lock your hands together behind your head and lean back while pulling your arms backwards. This stretch can be excessively vicious for the back ribs, so consider placing a towel on the edge or adjust the stretch to avoid this discomfort.



- Pectorals [2] This is the king's chest stretch! Kneel on the floor and interlock your forearms together. Rest them on the seat of the chair with your head dropping below the surface. Let your chest and head sink to the floor.



- Pectorals [3] Rest your forearm on the edge of a wall, making a 90 degree angle with your elbow and turn. Different regions can be stretched simply by moving the hand up and down the wall (changing the angle). You can also do both arms at once if you have this luxury. This is my personal favorite chest stretch.



- Pectorals [4] Another stick stretch! Grab a stick with the palms facing down spread comfortably apart. Now, raise the stick overhead and behind you while pushing your chest out. EXCELLENT!

## Shoulders



- Shoulders [1] We will start our shoulder stretching quest with the anterior shoulder. For this stretch you will sit and recline on the floor with your palms down about a foot (30 centimeters) behind your hips. Your fingers should point away from your body and your legs should extend pointing forward. Just lean back as far as possible!



- Shoulders [2] Here's something a little more advanced. It looks like a ramp! Start just like the previous stretch, except instead of sliding out, you will raise your trunk off the floor and open your chest up.



- Shoulders [3] We will need a wall or structure for this stretch. Stand with your hands behind your back resting on a wall at about shoulder height, your fingers should point upward. Now, bend your legs and feel the stretch!



- Shoulders [4] CHAIR, BENCH, OR OTHER SUPPORT STRUCTURE REQUIRED. This is a

milder stretch for the anterior shoulder although adequate strength will be needed to maintain the position. First, support yourself with your body out and your arms locked straight. Then, simply bend the arms while lowering your rear to the floor.



- Shoulders [5] Here we have our medial shoulder stretch (deltoids or delts as most call em). Sit down with both arms straight on the edge of the seat. Your shoulders and hands need to be rotated to the outside. Now, lean towards one side and feel your deltoid flatten and pan out. Feel the stretch in the middle of the shoulder. This stretch is actually difficult to hit right. You should definitely feel it in the middle, larger part of the shoulder. Try rotating the hands farther out to see if that helps aid stretching the correct region. NEH!



- Shoulders [6] Lateral shoulder stretch! LATERAL SHOULDER STRETCH! Okay, bend one arm across to the other shoulder and grasp this arm with the opposite hand. Pull your elbow back to finish! Wow, easy. Actually this stretch can be manipulated many ways, try bending and extending the stretched arm to find the best stretch.



- Shoulders [7] Drunkard shoulder stretch, especially good at ... bars... yep. But we will be using a chair! Rest your forearm in the seat with the elbow bent and lower your head and shoulder to seat level. This also stretches the pectoral.



- Shoulders [8] Cool, a posterior shoulder stretch. Sit or stand with good posture! Place one arm behind the back at about waist level. Turn your head and rotate your trunk toward the stretched side. Shit, anybody who's tried putting sunscreen or tanning accelerator cream on their back will be familiar with this feeling.



- Shoulders [9] Okay, towel, theraband, or some wipey is needed for this stretch. This stretch was actually THE stretch used to rehabilitate and regain lost flexibility in a shoulder injury I had January 2004. To say the least, it's pretty vicious - be careful with it. One arm behind the back, like you are a ninja drawing a sword from a sheath: This hand holds the towel down for the other to grasp. The other hand behind your back near your waist level, grabs this towel. Now, use your cute little fingers to get a good grip and DRAW THAT SWORD OUT FROM THE SEATH AS FAST AS POSS- NOOOOOOOOOO! Gently pull up with the top hand, getting the bottom hand as far up as possible.



- Shoulders [10] Our last shoulder stretch will be for the extensors. Raise your hands up and cross one wrist over the other, interlocking the fingers or palms touching. Now, keep the arms straight and pull your elbows back behind your ears.



## Arms and wrists



- Arms and wrists [1] Biceps, easy to stretch. Just grab onto the edge of a wall or anything else sturdy and straighten the arm like crazy. If you look away from the stretched arm it will increase the ... stretch! Hah. Try to minimize pectoral stretch.



- Arms and wrists [2] Grasp onto a stick resting behind your thighs with the palms facing forward. Try to push the stick against the back of the thighs. A better way to do this type of stretch is to hold a barbell in a preacher curl rack in the gym while the weight pulls the biceps.



- Arms and wrists [3] Entering this stretch is slightly difficult to describe. Just copy what I do, hahaha, and straighten the elbows to stretch the biceps.



- Arms and wrists [4] Time for some tricep stretching! Raise one hand above and bend it behind your head reaching towards the middle back. Grasp your elbow with the other hand and pull the elbow it behind your head. YEEE HAW!



- Arms and wrists [5] You will need a theraband/towel/wipey thing for this stretch. Hold onto this object and raise this arm above and behind your head, lowering it behind you. Grasp the wipey with your free hand and pull down.



- Arms and wrists [6] BRACHIORADIALIS STRETCHES! WHOOOOOOOOOOO! Kneel on all fours and place the tops of your hands against the floor, fingers pointing toward your knees. Lean against your bent wrists.



- Arms and wrists [7] Do I *really* need to describe this? Just push down on the back of one hand with the other!



- Arms and wrists [8]A wrist flexor stretch, for you my darling... This is stupid easy, I can't believe I'm explaining this. Place the heel of one palm against the tops of the fingers of the other hand. Press the heel of your hand against your fingers. Dahhh... I've sunken to an all time low.



- Arms and wrists [9]Kneel on all fours. Bend your wrists and place your palms against the floor, fingers pointing forward. Now, simply lean to the front and feel the goodness of the world come upon your wrist flexors.



- Arms and wrists [10]Wow, it got dark again. Turn your arms in so the tops of the wrists touch each other, then curl your fingers and hands up towards the outside.



- Arms and wrists [11]This is difficult to explain; Turn and grasp a stick with your hands inverted, then bend your elbows and maintain the grip the best you can. Hope that helps.



- Arms and wrists [12]Kneel on all fours. GOOD GOD - WE ARE MERELY SWITCHING OUR HANDS AROUND! BLASPHEMY! Make your fingers point to your body this time and lean BACKWARD.



- Arms and wrists [13]AHHHHHHHHH!!! THAT'S IT, I'M TYPING IN CAPS! DOWN! ON ALL FOURS! NOW! BEND YOUR WRISTS WITH HANDS FLAT ON THE FLOOR - THE HEEL OF EACH HAND FACING THE OTHER. NOW LEAN BACKWARD OR FORWARD.

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## A summary for static passive flexibility training

Wow, I feel like this is the end of something big. Actually, we've covered a lot of ground here. If you've never distinguished different methods of static-passive stretching before you can do so now by beginning to integrate both isometrics and relaxed stretching into your training. Static passive flexibility can be brought up to high levels quickly, achieving the splits should only take one or two months from any level of experience if the methods are properly applied. You should see flexibility increase on a day to day basis if the stretches are properly included into your training. I feel I've provided an adequate number of stretches for your own use. However, this isn't every stretch under the sun. There are a lot of variations and neat stretches still out there waiting for you to try. Enjoy!

## Developing static active flexibility

Static-active flexibility is described as the ability to assume and maintain extended positions using only the combined tension of the agonists and synergists while the antagonists are being stretched. You must learn to relax the stretched muscles and build up enough tension in the opposing muscles, so that body parts can be held in the desired extended positions. Ultimately, your static-active flexibility depends on your static passive flexibility and static strength; but you should also use dynamic strength exercises for its development.

## Guidelines for static active stretching

Static active flexibility is difficult to develop to the level of your dynamic or static passive flexibility. One should employ a combination of both isometric tensions and dynamic strength exercises for the best results. For example, you could keep raising and lowering your leg to the side in one slow and continuous motion for a dynamic strength exercise, possibly followed by some static active holds: Such as holding the leg at the maximum height for six seconds or more (with maximum height emphasized over duration). Overall, static active flexibility depends on your static passive flexibility and static strength.

**[WARNING]** Regarding holding leg extensions, you need a strong lower back or you risk injury. As a weight test of lower back strength, you should be capable of comfortably deadlifting at least twice your body weight, no grit or problems; Otherwise, you risk possible injury or dismal progression. Moreover, static active stretches that involve muscles of the back squeeze inter vertebral discs and may increase lordosis of the spine. This compression becomes more harmful when the spine is bent, or bent and twisted (such as on leg extensions to the side). In between static active stretching exercises for the lower body, do stretches such as forward bends and pelvic tilts to minimize harm, relieve spasms, and increase the amount of space between the vertebrae.

## Static active in your training

Static active flexibility will not improve your dynamic kicks or tricks. Holding a leg up is not developing dynamic flexibility nor dynamic strength, it is developing a static active flexibility and static strength that is specific to that particular hold. Strength, like flexibility, is specific to the speed of movement, its angle, and range of motion. To increase specific strength for kicking or tricking, you will find more value in exercises that are dynamic in nature. This doesn't make highly developed static active flexibility any less impressive, it is still something that will make you gawk in awe when witnessing a master of it; But, it will not augment the proficiency of your dynamic kicks or tricks.

## A selection of static active stretches



- Back lift hold Simply extend one leg behind and hold it up as high as you can.



- Front kick hold [1] Begin by lifting one knee up in front of you as high as you can with squared hips and shoulders.



- Front kick hold [2] Extend the kick and straighten the knee, hold this position.



- Side hold [1] This can be done a few ways. The side hold can be entered through a round or side kick. Here is the preliminary hold for the roundkick side hold. Lift the knee up chambered as high as you can, turn the thigh on it's side with the knee pointing in the direction the kick will extend.



- Side hold [2] Extend and hold this position as high as you can. Keep your hands and body up.



- Side hold [3] Sometimes it might be beneficial to pull the leg up manually or hold onto a support.



- Ankle weight mime You can use ankle weights if you wish! LOOK! I'm acting like I'm putting on an ankle weight! Oh man. I am the shit.



- Upper body hold Here is an example of an upper body static-active hold. Interlock the hands behind your body and slowly lift them behind you until you can no longer increase the amplitude. Hold this position.



- Twist hold Keep your feet facing forward and twist to one side as far as you can go. Hold this position.



- Twist hold with weight The same stretch as above except with a weight to alter the stretch.

## The conclusion for step 3

WOW! That's it! In step one we've learned the importance flexibility training plays in tricking and why developing it to optimal levels is important. In step two we learned some basic principles of flexibility training, such as the difference between the flexibility types, what happens when you stretch, and what factors could affect your flexibility development. In this step (step 3) we've discussed in detail [How to develop] the different types of flexibility. You learned different stretches and how to implement them in your workout and long term training program. You should now be ready to include flexibility exercises in your training and see some great improvements. Thanks for reading everything I've written on flexibility, I hope you've enjoyed it. Would you like to go back to the flexibility tutorial [starter page?](#)