

Stretching and Indian Yoga

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Stretching Instructions

In this section you will find stretching advice for martial arts, artistic gymnastics and fitness training. Here is a short list of all types of stretching, beginning with the one causing least muscle soreness:

1. Static Passive Stretching - can be applied daily.
2. Static Active Stretching - can be applied daily.
3. Most Dynamic Stretching Techniques - can be applied 4 or 5 times per week.
4. Dynamic Ballistic Stretching - can be applied 3 to 4 times per week.
5. Isometric Stretching - can be applied up to 3 times per week. Not for growing children.
6. PNF-Stretching Techniques - should not be applied more than 3 times per week. Not for growing children.

Stretching Warm-Up

In order to avoid injuries from stretching, it's necessary to warm up properly. A proper warm-up includes joint and muscle warm-up. When I talk about joint-warm-up, I don't mean joint circling. Slow concentrated squats or calf raises warm up your joints just as good as joint circling, but don't air out your joints that much. Or sit down and move knees or ankles in the air. However... Most martial artists swear on joint circling, and that's why their ankles sound like machine guns when they walk. (Joint circling is not that bad if you don't go through the full range of motion). After 3 to 5 minutes of joint warm up, do up to 15 minutes of cardio activity (muscle warm up)? Running, Rope skipping, Ball games etc.

Technical description: Stretching Warm-Up

- Warm-up sample routine.
This warm-up is pretty long because only stretches are done afterwards.
 - Joint Warm-up
 - Walk 200 meters on your toes
 - 100 to 200 calf raises with closed legs (without weight)
 - 50 to 100 squats without weight
 - Sit down and circle legs, calf's and feet in the air. (Very slow concentrated movements)
 - Stand up and lift your knees 10 times in front of you and 10 times sideways to warm up your hips.
 - Very slow concentrated shoulder, elbow and wrist rotations in the air. (don't "press" the hands together when you rotate your wrists)
 - Muscular Warm-up
 - 5 Minutes of jogging (Pulse beat up to 135)
 - 7 Minutes of running (Pulse beat up to 165)
 - 3 Minutes of Rope skipping, Ball games or other intensive activity.

Dave's advice: Stretching Warm-Up

- Joint circling is not considered a good warm-up technique.
- Cycling doesn't warm up your entire legs. Running is a much better warm-up.

General knowledge about stretching and flexibility.

First of all you have to know that there are different types of stretching, just as there are different types of flexibility or exercises.

Types of Stretching:

DYNAMIC STRETCHING (involves motion)

STATIC STRETCHING (doesn't involve motion)

ISOMETRIC STRETCHING (involves muscle contraction while stretching)

PNF STRETCHING (mixture of isometric and other stretching types - very effective)

Static Stretching

A static stretch is a form of stretching where no motion is involved.

There are two types of static stretches: Passive static stretches and active static stretches.

Passive static stretches are stretches where you don't contribute an additional force to the stretch. For example when you put your foot on a ladder wall to stretch your hamstring.

Active static stretches are exercises where a muscle gets stretched through a force.

For example the front split, where your body weight presses you into a position where your legs are stretched or when a training partner pushes your leg up with his shoulder.

Don't press against the stretch, because that would be an isometric stretch.

It's one force like your body weight against the flexibility of the muscle.

No matter if passive or active, you have to be totally relaxed -

The flexibility of the muscle is the limit. But be careful, sometimes the body weight can be too much for the muscle you want to stretch. Pick your exercises carefully and make sure your training partner knows how hard he can pull / push.

Learn more about isometric stretching and PNF-stretching.

Description: Static Stretching

- **Static Stretching Examples. Active and Passive Stretches.**
The front split: Your body weight presses you down and stretches your legs actively. As soon as you can go do the front split with your behind touching the floor, the front split is no longer an active stretch. Because there is no extra force

on your leg muscles, the stretch becomes passive.

To make it active again, you would have to lean forward or back.

However, if you try to stretch the front split like explained above and your body weight is too much for the range of flexibility of you legs, you will most likely push against the stretch with the strength of your legs. (otherwise you would injure yourself). This way the active static front split stretch turns into an isometric front split stretch.

Dave's advice: Static Stretching

- Static (active and passive) stretches can be applied on a daily basis. Isometric, dynamic and ballistic stretches on the other hand should only be applied up to 3 times per week.
- Passive static stretching is the least intensive type of stretching. Active static stretching is the most spread type of stretching
- Applying passive active stretches can release pain when you are sore.
- If you have never stretched before, only apply static stretches and learn all the exercises you are interested in. After a few weeks or month later, you can start doing isometric stretches etc.

Dynamic Stretching

A dynamic stretch uses the speed of a movement to stretch muscles and tendons.

The end position is not held. Motion is involved the whole time.

Ballistic stretching is a form of dynamic stretching that uses even more effort to force the muscle beyond its limit. (More intensive & more likely to lead to an injury)

A dynamic stretch not necessarily has to be a kick like shown here.

Walking flat stances or lunges also stretch your muscles dynamically.

Exercises like the one shown above can also be ballistic stretches. (See Dave's advice)

Find exercises and more information about stretching at [stretching main](#).

Description: Dynamic Stretching

- Make your dynamic stretches sport-specific. So try to execute the stretch like if you were doing a front-stretch kick. Hold with one hand on a ladder wall and extend the other arm horizontally. Keep your hips motionless, look straight forward, extend both knees and elbows and hollow your back slightly.
- Swing your right leg forward up, so that the hamstrings are stretched
- Then let your leg fall, swing it again and kick up again. Only create momentum for a short moment. If you keep creating a more and more speed as you kick up, and then pull the leg down really fast, you are stretching ballistic ally. (see Dave's advice)

Dave's advice: Dynamic Stretching

- Ballistic stretching is a more intensive form of dynamic stretching. For example when you stand with your legs closed and fully extended and grab your heels with both hands, then use speed, the strength of your arms and gravity to bring your head to your feet, that's a ballistic stretch. All the wushu stretch kicks for example are ballistic stretches. Before you do them, you should warm up with static stretches and dynamic stretches.
- Sports where dynamic stretches are recommended: Ballet, martial arts, wushu, TKD, weightlifting etc.
- Sports where only static stretches are recommended: Bodybuilding, running, spinning, etc.
- Normal dynamic stretches are good before competitions and if applied correctly, reduce muscle tightness.

Ballistic Stretching

In this lesson you will learn how to apply a ballistic stretch.

Ballistic stretches are usually used for sport-specific stretch. Of course you can turn any other position into a ballistic stretch. This type of stretching is very popular among martial arts ballet and rhythmic gymnastics. Before we get started, you have to know the difference between dynamic stretching and a ballistic stretching. Actually a ballistic stretch IS a dynamic stretch. It's just a more intensive and dangerous form of a dynamic stretch. Any stretch where motion is involved is dynamic. Ballistic stretches are when you play with the elasticity of the muscle. Find more information about stretching at stretching main.

Description of the example shown above: Ballistic Stretching

- Grasp the ball of your foot with both hands and look down to the tip of your shoe. Keep your back straight and extend your left knee. The knees stick together. The beginning position is a static passive stretch. For more information on this position go to: Stretching -> Crouched Wushu Stretch.
- Then pull yourself towards the tip of your shoe and keep the left knee straight. The muscle acts like a tight rubber band, so that you bounce back when the muscle is fully stretched. Be careful; don't pull too hard at the beginning. The goal of this stretch is to bring the chin to the tip of the shoe. (The goal of the ballistic crouched wushu stretch - not the goal of all ballistic stretches!) The difference between normal dynamic stretches and ballistic stretches is, when you apply a ballistic stretch, you move faster or create momentum, go closer to your limits and use the elasticity of your muscles.
- Then bounce back and repeat without bending the knee. Go back to a position where the leg is stretched with 20 to 50 % intensity (don't stop) and move forward again.

Only athletes with a lot of stretching experience should apply ballistic stretches. You could easily overstretch and injure yourself.

Dave's advice: Ballistic Stretching

- Warm up sufficient before you do any ballistic stretch.
- When you do a ballistic stretch, you usually pull yourself towards something or, like in the example above, pull yourself towards your foot.
Another option would be creating momentum.
For example when you swing your leg up -> requires more sensitiveness.
Doing ballistic stretches with you training partner is not a good idea, because he probably won't know the limits of your flexibility.
However, a lot of people still do it.
- Bounce 20 to 50 times, don't pull too hard, and be careful with your knees.
- Ballistic stretches are usually used to gain flexibility for a specific technique.
- Some people like to end their PNF series with a ballistic stretch.
Personally I don't think this is good for the joints, so I never combine PNF and ballistic stretching.

Isometric Stretching

In this lesson you will learn how to apply an isometric stretch.

Isometric stretching is one of the best methods to improve static passive flexibility and strength in stretched positions. Some athletes even believe that without isometric stretching exercises, it is impossible to tap your full potential of flexibility.

Find more stretching methods at [stretching main](#).

Description: Isometric Stretching

- First off, let me explain how an isometric stretch works.
Before you stretch a specific muscle isometric ally, you have to apply a static stretch.
(static stretch = stretch where no motion is involved)
Now most, but not all muscle fibres are stretched.
Then you contract the stretched muscle.
The contraction shortens the muscle and therefore helps to stretch the rest of the muscle fibres. Even if it feels very uncomfortable to stretch further, the contraction will be ok. You will hardly feel anything. Actually the contraction can even make the stretch more comfortable.
- How to contract a muscle while stretched.
The principle of isometric stretching (above) is simple.
The problem often is that people don't know how to stretch and contract a muscle at the same time. There are 4 ways to do this:

1. **Free isometric contraction:**
Just like if you were flexing you biceps to show off your guns.
Let two opposing muscles work against each other.
(for example biceps and triceps or hamstrings and quadriceps)
Or flex the entire leg, so that all leg muscles are contracted.
(this always works)
2. **Work with the weight of your body:**
For example when you do an isometric front split stretch:
Move down as far as you can, hold the lowest position for a moment and
then try lift you hands slowly from the floor, so that your leg muscles have to
carry your weight.
3. **Press or bend:**
For example when you stretch your hamstring on a ladder wall.
Press you heel down and bend your knee slightly. (0 to 3 degrees)
Or do a standing hamstring stretch with closed legs, hold your heels and
try to lift you upper body while you pull your chest towards you shins with
the strength of your arms.
4. **With a training partner:**
A partner can also help you build up resistance.

Dave's advice: Isometric Stretching

- Warm up before you apply isometric stretches. (no isometric stretches in the warm up)
- Don't hold isometric stretches longer than 15 seconds.
- Do 3 to 5 isometric stretches per workout. (max. 3 times per week)
- Only apply isomeric stretches on big muscles. (not on the forearms or the triceps)
- Rest at least 48 hours after every isometric stretching routine.
- People who just recovered from an injury or have joint weaknesses and children under 13 years of age should not apply isometric stretches.
- Isometric stretches should not be applied before competitions or in the morning.
- Check the PNF lesson.

PNF Stretching

PNF => Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation.

Of course you can also use PNF for other stretches.

But stretching small muscles like the forearms or the calves with PNF is not recommended.

Also be aware that using PNF every day can lead to overtraining, extreme soreness and injuries.

Find more stretching info at stretching main.

Technical description: PNF Stretching

1. Stage 1 of PNF (initial static stretch & warm up stretch) hold 20 to 30 seconds
Stretch as far as you can stretch with a static stretch.
Stage 1 is kind of like a warm up for stage 2 and 3 and therefore should not be too intensive.
However... Make sure you warm up sufficient before you apply a PNF stretch.
2. Stage 2 of PNF (isometric stretch) hold approximately 15 seconds
That's when the stretched muscle is contracted while stretched (from stage 1) .
In the example of a front split, just try to carry as much weight as possible with the feet.
Lift your hips slightly, so that your front hamstring and the rectus femoris of the back leg are contracted while stretched.
For more info on how to apply an isometric stretch, please visit the isometric stretching tutorial.
The contraction of stage 2 will thicken the muscle while it is stretched from stage 1.
So your muscle is basically forced to become more volume and in stage 3 you can use this increased volume to stretch even further. Further than to your normal limits.
3. Stage 3 of PNF (finish off with a static or a dynamic stretch) hold 20 to 30 seconds
Relax again and apply a static or a dynamic stretch. Static stretch preferred !
Because in stage 2 you contracted and stretched at the same time,
now your muscles can be stretched even further.
This is because the contraction kind of blew up your muscles for a moment.

Dave's advice: PNF Stretching

- As you now know how PNF works, you can imagine that applying it too often can injure you.
PNF is the most effective stretching technique and should not be applied more often than 3 times per week.
- If you are younger than 13, you should totally avoid PNF. (can harm growing joints & bones)
- Warm up sufficient before you apply a PNF stretch.
- In the beginning PNF was only applied in rehabilitation. (after injuries)
Now this stretching method is used by practitioners of many different sports, martial arts, ballet, etc.

Stretching Routine

The following exercises are listed in the right order to use it in your stretching routine.

Don't use PNF-stretching for every exercise.

Find detailed instruction on how to do each stretch at stretching main.

Technical description: Stretching Routine

- **Calf stretch**
The knee of the stretched leg should be straightened. The heel of the stretched leg should touch the ground(healthier for the ankle)
- **Calf stretch 2**
Like a ready stance with parallel feet.
The knee of the stretched leg should be straightened. The heel of the stretched leg should touch the floor.
Hip should be parallel to the wall. This stretching exercise is usually used by runners. It doesn't bring much flexibility, but also doesn't cause much harm to the ankles.
- **Hip stretch**
Like a ready stance with parallel feet.
Don't extend your hip. Straighten your back leg and lean back your upper body. The knee of the back leg should not touch the floor. This is the most important for the front splits, because most people who cannot perform the f-splits lack in hip flexibility and not in flexibility of the front leg.
- **Hamstring stretch**
Push the hips forward and grab the stretched leg at the Ankle. This is to protect the joint. Also don't straighten the foot
- **Leg stretch - Knee stretch**
Keep your knees straightened and close your legs. Go down without bending your back. It's not necessary to go very low with your head. Only a small movement of your lower back stretches the ligaments. This stretch is healthier if you sit down and reach for your toes with your hands. But unfortunately this way the exercise brings less flexibility.
- **Half turning kick stretch**
This is a special stretch for the half turning kick.
Knees and hips have to be parallel. (thighs touch each other).
Pull up the toes of your stretched leg and keep the knee straight. Try to touch your toes with your chin, without bending your back at all. It wont be possible if you separate your knees, bend your back or don't pull up your toes enough. At the beginning you can also try to touch your toes with an elbow. This is an extreme knee stretch (ligament stretch).
- **Front split**
If you automatically lean forward when you try the front splits, you lack in hip flexibility (see hip stretching)
The hip has be 90° to the front leg and the back leg. The front side of your quads have to lie flat on the ground. (To avoid hip-extension)
- **Back bridge.**
No question that the back bridge is bad for your spine, but sometimes theres no way

around it.

However... There are a few things you should know to protect your intervertebral disks. The back bridge is an abdominal-stretch and not a back stretch. To protect your back, don't relax your abs too much and bend your back uniformly. The angle between each vertebra and the next should be the same. This was for saver performance of this stretch. To get the maximum use out of this stretching-technique, straighten your arms and place them as close as possible to your feet. (Walk towards your toes with your hands). Look straight down to the floor or even to your feet. Put your heel down from time to time. Never do the back-bridge when your back hurts.

- **Back stretch**

This is the opposite of the back bridge and is usually done after the b-bridge. While the back-bridge stretches the abdominals and the shoulders, this backstretch stretches the back and the neck. Lie down on your back and put your arms down to the floor. Lift your legs and touch your ears and the floor at the same time with your knees.

Dave's advice: Stretching Routine

- Begin with light stretching exercises and finish with the harder ones. Light ones are calf-stretches etc. Stretching of small or few muscles. Hard stretches are stretches of big muscles or many muscles at one time. For example the splits.
- Learn about PNF-stretching

Standing Double-Leg Stretch

This exercise stretches the hamstrings and the knees.

Most people prefer the standing double-leg stretch, but actually the seated variation of this stretch is better for the knees and the back.

Learn more about stretching at [stretching main](#).

Description: Standing Double-Leg Stretch

- Stand upright and fully extend your knees. The legs are closed. Then hollow your back and bend forward down towards the floor. Reach for the floor or put your hands on your thighs without rounding your back. This is not about bringing your hands close to the floor or the head close to the legs. It looks nice if your head touches your shins, but actually the stretch comes from the angle between the lowest segments of your spine and your thighs. Raise your head a little. So if you extremely hollow your back but keep the angle between lower spine and legs small, the stretch can be more intensive than when you round your back and the hands touch the floor.
- Breath slowly and concentrated. This stretch static passive:

Only when you have reached the point where your hands touch the floor and you rest in this position.

Dave's advice: Standing Double-Leg Stretch

- Warm up your legs before you do this stretch.
- A little trick: Don't fully extend your arms when you lower your hands. This way it's easier to remember that this is not about touching the floor. If you round your back, you mess up the whole exercise and it also becomes difficult to breath.
- **Variations & Types of Stretching**
 - This stretch is static passive:
When you have reached the point where your hands touch the floor and you are able to rest in this position.
 - This stretch is static active:
When the weight of your upper body pushes you down or when you pull yourself down (grasp heels).
 - This stretch is dynamic:
When motion is involved. Move slowly and concentrated.
 - This stretch is isometric:
For example when you pull yourself towards your heels and try to raise your upper body at the same time.

Double Leg Stretch - Seated

This exercise stretches the hamstrings and the tendons in the knee area. The illustration above shows a static active double leg stretch. For other variations, read the Dave's advice. Find more stretches at stretching main.

Description: Double Leg Stretch - Seated

- Sit on the floor and extend both legs on front of you.
Put a little pillow or a mat under your calves, and keep your knees straight.
Then lean forward and grasp your feet.
Move your head towards your toes - Not towards your knees.
Look to your toes - Not to your knees.
It's recommended to straighten or hollow the back a little.
Now it doesn't matter if you actually keep your back 100% straight.
Because you are sitting on the floor, rounding the back wouldn't harm your spine.
(-> less pressure between the disks than when you stand)

Dave's advice: Double Leg Stretch - Seated

- Warm up your legs before you do this stretch.
- The stretch comes from the angle between the lower spine and thighs. The sharper the hip angle, the more intensive the stretch.
- For most people the standing double leg stretch feels more comfortable. The seated variation is healthier though.
- **Variations of this stretch:**
 - Static Passive Stretch: Sit and stretch your legs without moving or pulling.
 - Static Active Stretch: Pull yourself towards your feet. (shown here)
 - Dynamic Stretch: Move back and forth. (slowly - without creating momentum)
 - Ballistic Stretch: Bounce back and forth. Work with the elasticity of the leg muscles.
 - Isometric Stretch: Pull yourself towards your feet and try to extend you ankles at the same time. Contract your hamstrings and our quadriceps and press your calves down.
To make sure your knees are extended, you can put a pillow or a book under your calves or your heels.

Standing Separate Leg Stretch

In this lesson you will learn how to do a standing separate leg stretch.

This exercise stretches the hamstrings, the knees and the ankles.

With a wide stance you emphasize on ankle flexibility, and with a narrow stance you emphasize on hamstring and knee flexibility.

Find more exercises at stretching main.

Description: Standing Separate Leg Stretch

- Separate you legs so that the distance between your feet is between 1 and 3 shoulder widths. (leg-angle between 15 and 90°)
The feet are parallel or the toes point slightly in. (see foot prints in the illustration above)
- Lean forward-down and exhale at the same time.
Keep your back straight (or slightly hollowed) and don't bend your knees.
Then put your hands around your calves or behind your heels and gently pull your upper body towards your legs.
- The distance between the legs depends on your personal preference.
Most people start with a wide stance and close their legs during the next few sets.

Dave's advice: Standing Separate Leg Stretch

- Warm up before you stretch your legs.
- Hold this position for 30 seconds, relax and then repeat.
- Learn about dynamic, static and isometric stretching.
- This stretch is considered a static passive stretch.
If you want to do this exercise as a dynamic stretch, match the motion of your upper body with the speed of your breathing.
- Stop if your knees, your back or your hips hurt.

Cross leg Hamstring & Knee Stretch

The cross leg hamstring knee stretch is a stretch similar to the double-leg hamstring stretch. The main differences between the 2 exercises are that the cross leg stretch only stretches one leg and also emphasizes a bit more on knee flexibility.

Cross leg Hamstring & Knee Stretch

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Technical description: Cross leg Hamstring & Knee Stretch

- Stand with both knees extended and put your right foot over the left foot.
(so that you legs are crossed)
- Then bend forward down your upper body to stretch your hamstring & knee area.
It is very important that you keep your upper body straight or slightly hollowed.
Only your front leg should be stretched, not the back.
- You can either place your hands on your leg to keep the knee extended or reach for the floor. (reaching for the floor often leads to a bent back)

Dave's advice: Cross leg Hamstring & Knee Stretch

- Avoid fast sudden movements. If you decide to stretch dynamically, move slowly and concentrated. Whenever the knee area is stretched, be careful with dynamic stretching techniques. (exhale when you move down and inhale when you move up)
- Don't do this stretch when your knees hurt.
- Don't use knee bandages when you do this stretch.
- This stretch is often used by runners.

Quadriceps Stretch - Standing on one Leg

To do a quadriceps stretch where you stand on one leg and bend the other one back. This is quite simple, just make sure you don't pull too hard and injure your knee or the ankle. Find more stretching advice at stretching main.

Description: Quadriceps Stretch - Standing on one Leg

- Stand on one leg and hold the other leg with one or both hands.
What most people don't know is, that if you grasp your foot and pull up the toes, this can harm your ankle. That's why you should grasp the foot at the ankle and not at the toes.
To avoid bad pressure on the foot joint, you can also flex your ankle a bit.
You might pull the foot over its normal range if you relax or extend your ankle
- Your knees should be as close as possible together. Thighs pretty parallel.
- You can either support yourself with one hand on a wall or a tree or grasp your foot with both hands. Either way you should keep your thigh parallel and not pull too hard.

Dave's advice: Quadriceps Stretch - Standing on one Leg

- Grasp the foot at the ankle, not at the toes.
- It's not necessary to grasp the ankle with both hands.
You can use one hand to support yourself and pull up the foot with the other hand.

Bow step Hip Stretch

How to do a bow step hip stretch.

This exercise stretches the rectus femoris, the thin muscle that connects the hip with the knee on the front side of the leg.

This stretch can be used to improve hip flexibility in the front splits.

Find more stretching exercises at stretching main.

Technical description: Bow step Hip Stretch

- To stretch your right hip:
Stand with your feet approximately 3 shoulder widths apart. (left leg forward)
Extend your right knee and keep your upper body vertical or even lean slightly back.
if you lean forward your rectus femoris will not be stretched at all !)
- Lower your hip to increase the intensity of the stretch.
- To make this exercise even more intensive, you can turn your upper body to the left and grasp the thigh of your front leg like illustrated above.
Most people keep their upper body straight and put both hands on the thigh of the front leg.(to prevent bad pressure on the joints)

Dave's advice: Bow step Hip Stretch

- Don't twist out the back leg. The knee of the back leg should be fully extended and point straight down.
- If you lean forward, the rectus femoris will not be stretched and the exercise will be useless.

Half Side split Stretch

The half side split is a stretch for the inside of the thighs and the hips.

Technical description: Half Side split Stretch

- Stand with your feet about 3 shoulder widths apart go down on one leg. The other leg stays extended.
- Touch the floor with both hands and press out/back the inside of the thigh of you bent leg with the backside of your upper arm.(to make the stretch more intensive)
- Extend you hip.
Try to touch the floor with your hips.

Dave's advice: Half Side split Stretch

- Use the half side split stretch to warm up for the side splits or the scissor splits.
- For the stretch it doesn't matter if the foot of your front leg points up or forward.
Gymnastics style (toes point forward)
Taekwondo (toes point up)

Glute Stretch

Stretch that ass.

Technical description: Glute Stretch

- Sit down on the floor and extend both legs in front of you.
- Put one leg over the other and place the foot as close as possible to the hip.
- Keep your upper body upright and grab the leg. (pull towards upper body)
- A variation of this stretch is when you also bend the other leg (like illustrated above) and hold its ankle with one hand. Keep balance - try not to fall back.

Lying Waist Stretch

This exercise stretches the abdominals and the obliques.

Description: Lying Waist Stretch

- This is how to perform the left side of the lying waist stretch. To stretch the other side, just do the whole thing the other way around.
- Lie down flat on the floor and spread your arms to the left and the right. Extend both legs.
- Then lift the left leg over the right leg, and push the right leg forward under the left leg. This will turn your hips counter clockwise (almost 180 degrees) and stretch your waist. Keep your upper body flat on the floor.
- Hold this position for approximately 30 seconds and then stretch the other side.

How to stretch the Front Split

A front split is when your legs are extended 180° and one leg points straight forward and the other leg points straight back. It should not take you much more than 3 month to achieve the front splits. In most cases the biggest hurdle is the flexibility of the rectus femoris and the quadriceps of the back leg and not the hamstring of the front leg. You can use PNF to get your front splits down faster.

Technical description: Stretch the Front Split

- Don't extend your hips.
- Keep your upper body vertical.
If you lean forward, you only stretch the hamstring of the front leg and not the front splits.
The reason why most people can't do the front splits is that the rectus femoris and the quadriceps of the back leg are not flexible enough. The rectus femoris is the thin muscle that connects the hip with the knee on the front side of the leg.
- The back leg has to be flat on the ground
Don't twist out your back leg. Don't do a side split with your back leg and a front split with your front leg. (that's actually a very common mistake)
- In taekwondo the toes of the front leg point straight up.
(more intensive variation of the front split)

Dave's advice: Stretch the Front Split

- Especially when you are far from doing the front splits, it's difficult to keep the upper body vertical. (because you have to lean forward if you want to support yourself with your hands)
In that case it's a good idea to have 2 chairs on your sides, so that you can support yourself when you lower your splits. Keep your upper body upright.

- To make the front split more intensive for the hamstring, lean forward and grasp your foot.
- To make the front split more intensive for the back leg, raise your arms and then lean back. Advanced athletes are able to touch their back leg.

Front Split - Bend Forward

This stretch works a bit more on the hamstring of your front leg.

Technical description: Front Split - Bend Forward

- Do a front split like explained in the front split tutorial and extend your arms vertical, so that your shoulders touch your ears.
The hips have to touch the floor and the fingers have to point up as high as possible.
- Lean forward as low and far as you can and try not to round your back.
Even try to keep your back slightly hollowed.
Many beginners round their back and just try to touch the front leg with the head.
It's more important to reach forward.
Rounding the back to be able to touch the leg is just bad form.
In case you want to apply PNF:
Holding the arms and the upper body horizontal for a few seconds makes the stretch isometric.
- Put your hands down and relax your leg muscles for a moment.
Don't round your back.
You can stop the front split forward bend after this stage or keep going.
- ... or grab your front foot instead.
- And finally the most intensive variation of the front split forward bend. (isometric stretch)
Pull your foot closer to your body and lean further forward.
Try not to round your back.
Advice: If you tend to round your back automatically, look forward or even slightly up at this point.

Dave's advice: Front Split - Bend Forward

- Warm up with a normal front split.
- Stop immediately if the knee of your front leg feels uncomfortable.

How to do a Side Split

A lot of martial artists focus on the side split, even though the front split is more important for most kicks. Side split flexibility is important for kicks like the turning kick and of course the side kick.

Description: Side Split

- Fully extend your knees.
- Keep you side split as symmetric as possible.
Don't twist your hips or your trunk.
Stop immediately if you feel pain.
Warm up, warm up, warm up.
- Support yourself with your hands.
- Try to keep the soles of your feet flat on the floor.
If only the insides of your shoes touch the floor, your weight rests on the relaxed knees. By keeping the outsides of the shoes close to the floor, (ankle stretch) the forces are distributed in a better way.
- Hollow your back.
Angle between spine and hips = 90°.
That's the healthiest position for the hip joints when you spread your legs sideways.

Dave's advice: Side Split

- Warm up sufficient before you stretch the side split.
- Do the half side split stretch and the spread leg forward fold before you work on your side split.
- The side split should not be the first exercise in your stretching routine.
- Check this workout plan for the side split.

Scissor Split - Groin Stretch

For lots of martial arts kicks it's necessary to stretch the scissor split. The scissor split is a groin stretch, similar to the side split. You will need this kind of flexibility for more advanced techniques

Technical description: Scissor Split - Groin Stretch

- Sit down and spread your legs at least 90 degrees.
- Keep your back perfect straight
It doesn't matter if your toes point up or forward.
This depends on the sport you are stretching for.
- There are several exercises you can do when you are in the scissor split.
For example lean to your left or your right foot.

Dave's advice: Scissor Split - Groin Stretch

- Warm up at least 5 minutes before you stretch the scissor split.
- This scissor split should not be the first stretch in your routine.

Front Split Workout Plan

This workout plan will help you achieve your front splits.
Make sure you warm up muscles and joints before you start stretching.

Description: Front Split Workout Plan

- First of all check the front split instruction to learn how to do a proper front split.
- Do following exercises before your training as a part of the warm up.
This should take you between 20 and 25 minutes.
 - 10 minutes - Run at a pulse between 130 and 150 bps.
 - 2 x 30 seconds per leg - Stretch your Calves
 - 2 x 30 seconds per leg - Stretch your Quadriceps
 - 1 x 30 seconds per leg - Yoga Trikonasana
 - 1 x 30 seconds per leg - Crossed Yoga Trikonasana
 - 2 x 30 seconds per leg – Bow step Hip Stretch
 - 2 x 30 seconds per leg - Front Split Intents (80 percent)
(make sure you upper body stays vertical. don't lean forward. As low as you can, but without bouncing)
 - After your martial arts or gymnastics workout, do each exercise again. 15 seconds per stretch.
 - Rest 15 to 30 seconds between exercises.
- 3 times a week finish this routine with 3 front splits.
The second front split intent is a PNF stretch.
- Once a week warm up 15 to 20 minutes and then stretch a full hour.
Do every exercise at least twice as often as normally.
Try to hold some stretches up to 60 seconds.
Also do dynamic stretches or kicks in this special workout.
This day is also to test out your max flexibility.
If you feel you are less flexible than the last week, you probably over trained => so lower your training volume and stretch less intensive during the week.

Dave's advice: Front Split Workout Plan

- Before you start working on your front splits, read the front split tutorial and find your weaknesses. In most cases the problem is the rectus femoris and not the hamstring of the front leg.
So keep your upper body vertical as you try to go down.
- At the end of this routine you can also add a front split forward bend or a front split back bend.

The forward bend increases the stretch for the hamstring and the back bend increases the stretch for the rectus femoris.

- Take a hot shower or bath after intensive workouts.
- Stretch in a warm environment.
- Keep your muscles warm. Run between exercises, do squats or other leg exercises.
- After the warm up run you can also work on your hip muscles with ankle weights or rubber bands.
- If you feel very sore the day after your stretching workout, stretch 5 minutes in the morning.

In the morning don't stretch further than to 70 percent of your max flexibility.

Side Split Workout Plan

This workout plan will help you achieve the side splits.

Make sure you warm up muscles and joints before you start stretching.

Find more stretching instructions at stretching main.

Technical description: Side Split Workout Plan

- First of all check the side split tutorial to learn how to do a proper side split.
- Do following exercises before your gymnastics or martial arts training as a part of the warm up.

This should take you between 20 and 25 minutes.

- 10 minutes - Run at a pulse between 130 and 150 bps.
 - 3 minutes - Stretch for the front splits - Quadriceps, calves and other straight stretches.
 - 3 x 30 seconds per leg - Half Side Split Stretch
 - 2 x 30 seconds - Forward bend with Wide Legs
 - 3 x 30 seconds - Yoga Spread Leg Forward Fold
 - 1 x 40 repetitions - Lie down on the back and lift your extended legs vertical. Spread your legs towards the floor and close them again. !!! Slowly !!!
 - 2 x 30 seconds per leg - Side Split Intents (80 percent)
 - After your Taekwondo workout, do each exercise again. 15 seconds per stretch.
 - Rest 15 to 30 seconds between exercises.
- 3 times a week finish this routine with 3 side splits.

The second side split intent is a PNF stretch.

When you stretch your side split isometric, try to hold the stretch with the strength of your legs.

Lift the hands from the floor so that your leg muscles are stretched and contracted at the same time.

- Once a week warm up 15 to 20 minutes and then stretch a full hour.

Do every exercise at least twice as often as normally.

Try to hold some stretches up to 60 seconds.

Also do dynamic stretches or kicks in this special workout.

This day is also to test out your max flexibility.

If you feel you are less flexible than the last week, you probably over trained => so

lower your training volume
and stretch less intensive during the next week.

Dave's advice: Side Split Workout Plan

- Before you start working on your side split, read the side split tutorial.
- Take a hot shower or bath after intensive stretching workouts.
- Stretch in a warm environment.
- Keep your muscles warm. Run between exercises, do squats or other leg exercises.
- After the warm up run you can also work on your hip muscles with ankle weights rubber bands or cables.
- If you feel very sore the day after your workout, stretch 5 minutes static in the morning. In the morning you shouldn't stretch further than to 70 percent of your max flexibility.

Learn Yoga

Yoga is an exercise form originating in India. Yoga in Indian: "Devanagari" is famous for its spiritual touch and extreme stretches.

Yoga is one of the six schools of Hindu philosophy and practiced all over the world. Some use its exercises for physical health and fitness (asanas) , others do yoga because of spiritual reasons.

Tadasana - Yoga Mountain Pose

Most series of yoga poses & exercises begin and end with the tadasana (the mountain pose) In this pose you concentrate on your position and your breathing.

The tadasana usually makes it easier to stay focused and concentrated during long yoga sessions.

Find more yoga exercises at [yoga main](#).

Technical description: Tadasana - Yoga Mountain Pose

- Stand with your feet approximately shoulder width apart and let your toes point in slightly.
Stand slightly on the balls of your feet. Stand motionless with as little effort as possible.
- Your hands should hang down on the sides and your palms should point to your hips. (shoulders relaxed and broad)
- Keep your back straight and relaxed. (you can bend your upper back slightly forward, but it should not be notable)
- Breath slowly and concentrated.
- Look straight forward.

Dave's advice: Tadasana - Yoga Mountain Pose

- The Tadasana is not a REST pose.
Many yoga practitioners make the mistake to take the mountain pose as a relaxation position.
Remember that you still have to concentrate on your stance and your breathing.
Stay focused.

5 Tibetans - Yoga Rejuvenation Exercise

The "5 Tibetans" is one of the most popular and basic yoga exercises.

This yoga rite represents a great way for a quick physical or spiritual workout. You can easily do the 5 Tibetans in your office, a hotel room or even in your bathroom. All you need is a few minutes time, and enough space to swing your arms around or to do a push up. The 5 Tibetans can also be used as a warm up for other exercises, but of course they should not replace an entire warm up for something very physical like Taekwondo.

Technical Description: 5 Tibetans - Yoga Rejuvenation Exercise

- 1 - Having fun like a 3 year old child - 5 Tibetans Exercise 1
Stand upright and extend your arms at shoulder level. Hands apart as far as possible.
Turn around 21 times making small steps on the spot.
Everything up the hips stays stiff. (only the legs move)
At the end you should feel a bit dizzy.
- 2 - Tummy tucks - 5 Tibetans Exercise 2
Lay down on your back (lower back) and put your arms on the ground.
Press down your arms and hands.
Lift your straightened legs and pull in your toes while you move your upper back and your head forward up. This should stretch your legs and contract your abs at the same time.
Breath in when you raise your legs and your head
- 3 - Morning neck warm up - 5 Tibetans Exercise 3
Kneel with your legs together, let your arms hand (palms on the sides of your thighs) thighs and torso vertical. Then let your head go down, so that the back of your neck gets stretched.
Move your head back again and press forward your hips, while your head goes further back and your hands press into your hips from behind.
This tibetan exercise should stretch out your neck and your abdominals.
Breath in when you go backwards.
- 4 - Table posture - 5 Tibetans Exercise 4
Sit on the floor and have your legs about one foot apart.
Back straight, and hands on the floor (fingers point forward)
First let your head go forward down, so that your neck gets stretched. Then Push up your hips until your torso is horizontal. This exercise stretches back, abs and thighs and is good for leg and shoulder strength.
Breath in when you raise off the ground.
- 5 - Yoga cobra to downward dog - 5 Tibetans Exercise 5
Go to a push up position but put your hands closer to your legs, so that your hips raise.
Keep your legs straightened and try to keep your heels on the floor (calf stretch)
Your arms should be in one line with your torso and your elbows should be close to your ears.
Go down to a push up position with bent arms an bent knees, so that your chest and triceps get a little workout.
Push yourself forward and bend your back, so that your abdominals and shoulders get stretched.
This Tibetan is good for abdominal and upper body strength / flexibility.
Breath in when you raise up into the inverted v shape.

Repetitions: 5 Tibetans - Yoga Rejuvenation Exercise

- Perform 20 to 30 repetitions of each movement
- Do every exercise 1 to 5 times
- Rest, lay down and breath a minute after each time you finish all the 5 Tibetans.

Tips & Tricks: 5 Tibetans - Yoga Rejuvenation Exercise

- The 5 Tibetans exercise is also good for people who don't have time to exercise much or for days when you have to sit a lot.
Just take a break and do these few exercises after too many hours in front of a computer.
- Many people don't like the idea of doing yoga exercises. Especially if others are around.
You don't have to tell anybody that you are doing the 5 tibetans you can also modify the exercises. But doing them is better then sitting in an office over 8 hours without moving at all.

Yoga Warm up - Shoulder Stretch

This warm up stretch stretches the shoulders and partially also chest and biceps. All you need is a yoga mat to protect your knees and a short rope or a strap. This shoulder stretch is a good warm up exercise for bridges etc. Find more yoga lessons at yoga main.

Technical description: Yoga Warm up - Shoulder Stretch

- Kneel down and sit on your heels with your upper body upright.
Hold a strap or a rope in front of your chest with your elbows totally extended. The closer your hands are together, the harder this shoulder stretch is.
At the beginning you are recommended to try this with your hands about 2 shoulder widths apart.
The beginning: The arms should be horizontal and the spine vertical.
Look straight forward and breath slowly and concentrated.
- Lift your totally extended arms slowly and concentrated and inhale at the same time. Don't swing your arms fast.
The circle your hands make has to be as large as possible...
So don't bend your elbows, keep your chest high and don't let your shoulders hang. Also make sure you keep looking straight forward.
- The difference between the first and the second half of the circle is, that you inhale during the first half and exhale during the 2nd half.
So lower your hands behind the back without bending the elbows and exhale slowly. If your shoulders are not flexible enough for this, don't create momentum to let your hands pass.

Just move as far as you can (max: to horizontal level) and the next time hold your strap with your hands a bit further apart. Keep your chest high and look straight forward.

- Hold the strap behind the back and keep exhaling until all the air is gone from your lungs.
Then start inhaling slowly and move back up and exhale as you move forward down.
Don't forget that the whole motion has to be very slow and as wide as possible !

Dave's advice: Yoga Warm up - Shoulder Stretch

- If you are a beginner, don't try to hold the strap with your hands too close together.
- Move slowly and concentrate on your breathing.
Sit upright and keep your arms totally extended.

Related instructions: Yoga Warm up - Shoulder Stretch

- SCISSOR SPLIT
- ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA (yoga dog pose)
- PRASARITA PADOTTANASANA (yoga forward bend with wide legs)
- TRIKONASANA (yoga triangle pose)

Bilikasana - The Cat - Yoga warm up exercise

The bilikasana is the yoga cat exercise. Imagine you were a cat who archs and hollows its back.

Move slowly and breath in and out deep.

Technical description: Bilikasana - Yoga Pose

- Kneel down and place your hands on the floor.
Thighs and arms vertical.
- Breath out and move up your lower back, until you can see your belly button.
Arch your back like a cat and hold this position while you breath in for approx. 2 seconds.
- Then breath in and let your lower back sink back down.
Move your head up and make a hollow back.
Look up and hold this position for approx. 2 seconds.
Then repeat the whole thing.
- 5 to 10 repetitions.

Dave's advice: Bilikasana - Yoga Pose

- Use a yoga mat or something soft to protect your knees.
- Don't move too fast. The bilikasana should be done very, very slowly.
- Don't bend your arms as you change positions.

Adho Mukha Svanasana - Yoga Dog Pose

The adho mukha svanasana is a yoga pose that strengthens the upper arms, the back and the shoulders and also stretches the calves. This pose is often used as a passage between other yoga poses.

For example the trikonasana- triangle pose is usually started from the dog pose. Find more yoga poses at yoga main.

Technical description: Adho Mukha Svanasana - Yoga Dog Pose

- Start from a kneeling position with your upper back relaxed, so that your trunk rests in your shoulders. The arms are extended and vertical, the fingers point straight forward.
- Move back so that your arms hardly carry any of the weight.
- The lift your hip and lower your heels. (the whole foot sole has to be on the floor - calves are stretched slightly) For a "V" with your legs, your upper body and your arms.
Extend knees and elbows.
- To intensify the shoulder stretch, move further back and lower your shoulders a bit.

Dave's advice: Adho Mukha Svanasana - Yoga Dog Pose

- Move and breath slowly and concentrated.
- The adho mukha svanasana is often followed by a trikonasana or a reverse trikonasana.

Vrksasana - Yoga Tree Pose

The tree pose improves balance, concentration and posture. (especially for people with leg and foot problems and for people who sit a lot during work) The tree pose strengthens calf thigh and back muscles and slightly stretches the hip and groin area.

Find more yoga exercises at yoga main.

Technical description: Vrksasana - Yoga Tree Pose

- Start from the mountain pose (tadasana)
- Lift your left knee and put your left foot sole on the inside of your right thigh. Exhale while you do this.
- Then raise your extended arms to horizontal level. Both palm point down.
- Inhale again and close your palms in front of your chest at the same time (praying position)
- Finally exhale and lift your closed palms over head. Keep breathing concentrated through the belly and hold this position for a while.

Dave's advice: Vrksasana - Yoga Tree Pose

- Breath deep (belly breathing) and move slowly.
- The tree pose is easier to balance when you look straight forward to something far in front of you.

Dhanurasana - Yoga Bow Pose

The dhanurasana expands the chest, stretches abdominals & shoulders and the quadriceps and strengthens back and neck. This pose is good for the posture and should be performed by people who sit a lot during work.

Technical description: Dhanurasana - Yoga Bow Pose

- Lie down on your stomach. Legs and arms extended. Backhands on the floor. Palms point up.
- Bend you legs and lift your feet, so that your heels are very close to your butt.
- Grab your ankles with both hands. Thumbs point down.
- Increase the stretch by lifting / extending the legs further up and pushing the chest further forward up. Only a small spot of the stomach touches the floor. Keep breathing regularly and look straight forward or slightly up.

Dave's advice: Dhanurasana - Yoga Bow Pose

- Breath slowly and concentrated.

Prasarita Padottanasana - Forward Bend with wide Legs

The Prasarita Padottanasana is a yoga pose reducing tension, stiffness and tiredness in your Hamstrings.

Additional it works out your lower back and your neck muscles, which is good for your overall posture.

(only if you keep your back straight during the exercise)

Find more yoga exercises at yoga main.

Technical description: Prasarita Padottanasana - Yoga

- Just like most yoga exercises, the Prasarita Padottanasana is started from the Tadasna. (mountain pose) See mountain pose lesson.
- Make a hop and separate your feet approximately 2 shoulder widths. Toes point inwards slightly. The knees have to stay extended during the whole exercise.
- Bend forward slowly and reach for the floor with your hands. (fingers point straight forward)
It is essential that you keep your upper body straight and if you are able to touch the ground with your hands, your arms should be vertical. (the weight should not rest

on your hands)

If you cannot touch the ground, just separate your legs a bit further and go as far as you can.

(but don't bounce or arch your back, keep in mind that the gravitation should do most of the stretch)

- Push your hips up and stretch your neck towards the floor.
- When you can do this easily, you can grab your calves with your hands and pull your upper body closer to your legs. This way you can stretch even further. But don't pull too hard or bounce.

Dave's advice: Prasarita Padottanasana - Yoga

- The stretch should come from the gravitation. (weight of the upper body)
You can slightly pull your upper body towards the legs with the help of your arms, but bouncing, head banging and pulling really, really hard with your arms is not what this exercise is made for.
- The further you feet are apart, the easier the exercise.
To intensify the Prasarita Padottanasana you can stand with your feet closer together.

Trikonasana - Yoga Triangle Pose

The trikonasana (triangle pose) is a popular yoga position that stretches the hamstrings, the hips and the calves, improves the overall balance and also strengthens the lower back. Find more yoga poses at [yoga main](#).

Technical description: Trikonasana - Yoga Triangle Pose

- This description is for the left side of the trikonasana. (when you step forward with the left leg)
To do the right side of this pose, just do the whole thing the other way around.
- Start from the dog pose and step forward with your left foot.
Step forward about 2 shoulder widths. (approx. 1 meter)
Knees and elbows have to be extended. Keep the palms on the floor but don't let your arms carry any of your weight.
- Put your hands next to your left leg, so that your hamstring is stretched a bit more.
Don't raise the heel of your right foot. The calf muscle of your right leg has to be stretched too.
Keep your spine straight and your upper body horizontal.
- Then put your left hand on the right side of your left ankle and your right hand on the Achilles tendon.
(Achilles tendon = bottom of the calf muscle / ankle / heel)
Don't let the weight of your upper body rest on your hands.
The right hand should only touch the ankle just like the hands only touched the floor before.
Use your back muscles to support this position. (not your arms)

- Raise your right hand, so that the fingers point straight up and your hands are as far as possible apart.
Now the 2 arms and your shoulders should be in a vertical line and the upper body should be horizontal.
- Finally twist your head 180 degrees and look straight up to your right hand.

Dave's advice: Trikonasana - Yoga Triangle Pose

- Concentrate on the breathing and move slowly and concentrated.
- Keep your spine straight during the whole exercise.

Parivrtta Trikonasana - Crossed Yoga Triangle Pose

The parivrtta trikonasana is a triangle pose where you lift the arm on the side where your hip is closed. (the side of your front leg.) This makes the hip-thigh stretch a bit more intensive.

The parivrtta trikonasana is often done after the normal trikonasana (triangle pose) This pose strengthens the lower back muscles, stretches the hips, the hamstrings and the calves and also improves your balance and your coordination.

Find other yoga poses at [yoga main](#).

Technical description: Parivrtta Trikonasana - Crossed Yoga Triangle Pose

- This description is for the right side of the parivrtta trikonasana.
To do the left side of this pose, just do the whole thing the other way around.
- Start from the dog pose and step forward with your right leg.
Step forward about 2 shoulder widths.
Both knees and the elbows have to be extended. Keep the palms on the floor but don't let your arms carry any of your weight.
- Put your hands next to your right foot so that your right hamstring is stretched slightly.
Don't lift your left heel. The calf muscle of your left leg is stretched too. Keep your spine straight.
- Then put your left hand on the right side of your right ankle and your right hand on your Achilles tendon. (Achilles tendon = bottom of the calf muscle / ankle / heel)
Don't let the weight of your upper body rest on your right hand.
The hand should only touch the ankle just like the hands only touched the floor before.
Use your back muscles to support this position.
- Lift up your right hand so that the fingers point straight up and your hands are as far as possible apart. The 2 arms and your shoulders should be in a vertical line and the upper body should be horizontal.
- Finally twist your head 180 degrees and look straight up to your right hand.

Dave's advice: Parivrtta Trikonasana - Crossed Yoga Triangle Pose

- Concentrate on the breathing and move slowly and concentrated.
- Keep your spine straight during the whole exercise.

Virabhadrasana - Yoga Warrior Pose 1

The virabhadrasana is a good warm up exercise for backbends.

The lower back gets relaxed and the leg muscles are stretched and strengthened at the same time. The warrior pose strengthens legs, back, shoulders and arms.

It also improves balance and opens your hips and your chest.

You can find more yoga instructions at [yoga main](#).

Technical description: Virabhadrasana - Yoga Warrior Pose 1

- Kneel down, keep your back straight (vertical) and sit comfortable (hands on thighs)
- Step forward with one foot until the foot is a slightly in front of the knee (see virabhadrasana flash illustration above). The back leg rests on the floor with its toes and your knee on the mat.
- Lift the knee of the back leg and move a bit forward, (straighten back leg) so that the thighs of the front leg are horizontal and its lower leg is vertical.
- At the same time lift your arms and hook your thumbs together. Your view follows your hands. The arms should point straight up. If your lower back feels comfortable, you can even try to look backwards. If not, look straight forward. (horizontal)

Dave's advice: Virabhadrasana - Yoga Warrior Pose 1

- Inhale when you move up.
- You can use the warrior pose as a warm up for harder back and hip stretches, bridges etc.
- If you don't lift the back knee, the warrior pose is a bit easier. (because you will need less balance and leg strength)
- To make this exercise harder, just stand deeper.

Upavista Konasana - Yoga Spread Leg Forward Fold

The upavista konasana (spread leg forward fold) is one of the most popular seated yoga poses.

This pose stretches the hamstrings and the adductors and is often used as a warm up for the side splits.

You can find other yoga poses at [yoga main](#).

Technical description: Upavista Konasana - Yoga

- Sit on the floor and spread your legs.
Put both hands on the floor with your fingers pointing forward and look straight forward.
- Then place one hand behind you.

- Lift your hips and shift yourself forward so that your legs are stretched a bit more (the stretch should be comfortable - not too far)
Try to sit upright on your lower glutes or even on your hamstrings.
- Push your head as far as possible up / away from your hips, so that your spine is totally extended and vertical. (you can hollow the back slightly - don't lean back)
- Maintain this position and bring your palms together in front of your chest. Breath slowly and concentrated.
- Finally lean forward as far as you can and place your hands on the floor.
As you lean forward you must not round your back. (keep your back totally straight or slightly hollowed) The hands should be about shoulder width apart and the fingers should be spread (palms on the floor)

Dave's advice: Upavista Konasana - Yoga

- The knees have to stay totally extended during this exercise.
- Keep your spine straight as you lean forward and let the weight of your upper body do most of the stretch.
- Breath slowly and concentrated.
- The spread leg forward fold and the scissor split are technically the same.
- Most women find the upavista konasana beneficial during their period.

Padmasana - Yoga Lotus Pose

The lotus pose is a popular yoga position (sitting), where you cross your legs while you keep your trunk straightened and vertical. The lotus pose is perfect for meditation and helps to develop a good posture.

You can find more yoga instructions at [yoga main](#).

Technical description: Padmasana - Yoga Lotus Pose

- Sit on the floor with your legs extended in front of you and your upper body straight and vertical.
Legs and trunk form a "L"
- Then put your right foot on your left thigh so that the sole of your foot points up.
The foot should be as close as possible to the hip.
- Push down your right knee with your right hand. (slowly)
- Then put you left foot on your right thigh so that the sole of your right foot points up. (use both hands) Both feet have to be as close as possible to the hips.
- To finish the lotus pose, put your hands on your thighs with your palm either pointing up or down.
Lotus pose with palms pointing up: ENERGIZING
Lotus pose with palms pointing down: GROUNDING
- Keep your upper body vertical and concentrate on your breathing. (breath slow and concentrated)

Dave's advice: Padmasana - Yoga Lotus Pose

- Your upper body should always stay vertical and straightened. Also when you grab one leg to put it on your thigh.
To practice this, you can lean to a wall. (shoulder blades and hips should always touch the wall)
- Here a more sporty variation of the lotus pose:
Go into the lotus pose and then lean forward. Put your hands on the floor and try to do a handstand.