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## 1. THE MISSING LINK IN YOUR TRAINING

It was 2011 when I got into a Pilates class with one of my cousins, Victoria. “I have been lifting weights for some months now...this will be easy” I thought. Needless to say, I failed hard at doing the most basic stuff, but at the same time the other morning I felt something I had never quite felt before: I felt mobile. I didn't know it at the time, but the missing link in my training was not strength, more protein or speed, but the ability to move that only comes with flexibility training.



I think many people are still in this situation today. Most treat flexibility as a thing you have to pass through when your warming up, maybe grabbing your legs for a few seconds, moving your arm a little and then going into “the real thing”.

Nothing could be further away from the truth. **In fact, flexibility is one of the main missing links in most people's training.**

When it comes to strength, it seems clear to me that the words of athlete Rob Orlando are a good description: “How do you get strong? You lift heavy stuff”. Of course one can make it as complicated as possible, but in the end it is really a very straightforward process.

If it is like this in strength, how come it not be in flexibility? I know of so many people who have being stretching for years now only to keep being stiff as a board. They still struggle to touch their toes with their hands and cannot raise their arms without their lower back arching. I do not blame them, as I was the same until life force me to change. It was only when I got into Gymnastics type training that I realized how disabled my body was for performing beautiful movements.

Without flexibility, most of the very amazing gymnastics moves were **not even a possibility**. I had being ignoring my shadows, and it was now time to resolve them.

This discipline had showed me that **real strength is not separated from flexibility**, as together they work together in the journey towards better movement. I was 20 years old, and had to find the best possible ways to get flexible as fast as possible, as saffely as possible. Considering I had not done any major sport growing up, only the best tools would serve me.

If you have ever being frustrated about not getting flexible, don't despair, as all of your frustrations will now be the fuel for your future success.

**This is what I've learn.**

## 2. THE MIDDLE GROUND OF FLEXIBILITY

I have argued before that the best combination for creating a superior athlete is the mixture of Gymnastics and Weightlifting, and flexibility is not the exception to that.

You see, as Thomas Kurz explains in his DVD *Flexibility Express*, the two olympic disciplines that have the most flexible athletes are first Gymnastics and second Weightlifting. Nevertheless, there is a difference: while in the second one you can enter the sport around 14 years old or more and still achieve high levels of flexibility, in the first one it is more a matter of not losing the children flexibility in a time where they can easily get mobile.

I remember the first time I went to a Gymnastics class. I was 20 years old and wanted to find help in my movement journey, but I soon found it was going to be very frustrating. As soon as I got there, the coach asked “Can you do a handstand?” And I said no. He said I should warm up climbing a huge rope three times, and then do a handstand. No more instructions, just that command. I am sure not all gymnastics coaches are like this, but I attended two more places and it was still the same. As much as this approach may work with kids, I believe getting mobile is a huge challenge for adults that should be given much more consideration that “Just do a split”.

What we want is a good middle ground between flexibility and strength. For athletic purposes, we don't want to be that yogi that is so flexible as an spaghetti, nor that bodybuilder that is so stiff as a board. **Real power comes from the mixture of the soft and the hard** and, guess what? Gymnastics and Weightlifting are good references for that perfect mix.



### 3. THE GOALS

The first thing that you have to understand is that there are 3 types of flexibility. This are:

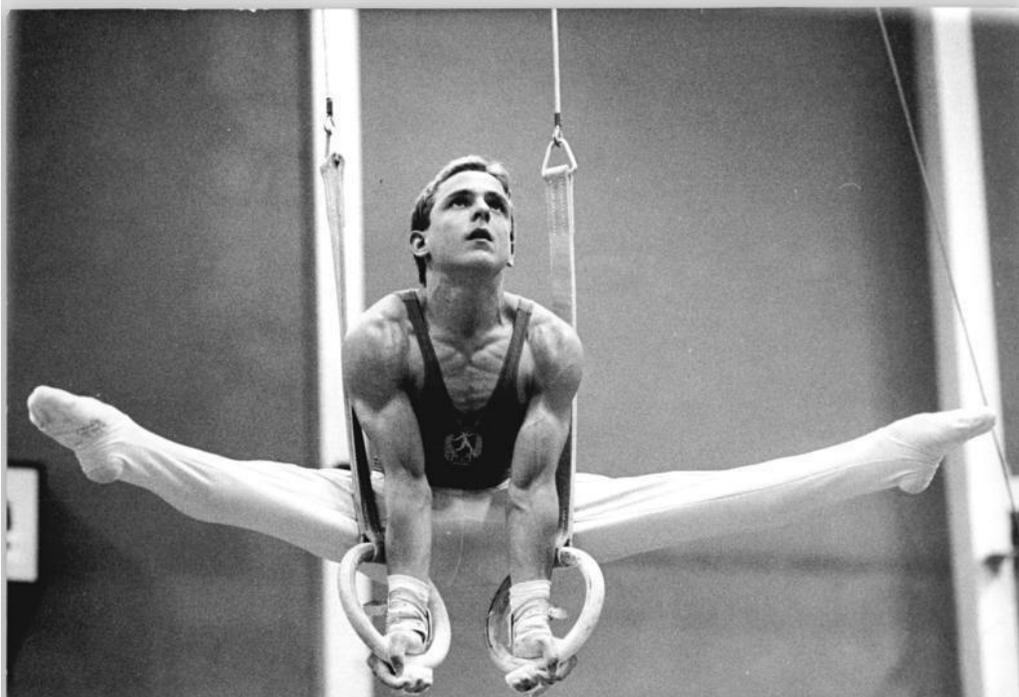
- a. Passive
- b. Active
- c. Dynamic

Passive flexibility would be an split, where you can relax in a position because the muscles being stretch are hold by something, in this case the floor.

Active flexibility would be holding your leg in front of you, where you need the strength of the contrary muscles that are being stretch to keep the limb in the air.

Dynamic flexibility would be a high kick, where there is a dynamic movement that combines the relaxation of the muscles elongating and the tightening of the muscles contracting.

**All types of flexibility depend of passive flexibility.** According to your sport you may need active or dynamic flexibility, but for any of them you will need the first one.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-1986-0705-008  
Foto: Gahlbeck, Friedrich | 5. Juli 1986

Just as a strongman has to develop all types of grip strength, a gymnast needs all types of flexibility, making his body capable of moving in a controlled manner or in a rapid contraction to reach a split in the air.

This is why you'd be surprised to see that gymnastics fundamental stretching position can be reduced to only 6. A huge problem I see with people is that they don't have stretching goals. This is like strength training: if you don't target anything, you'll reach anywhere.

You see, the stretching world could be divided into two branches that are not necessarily separated. On one hand, you have the objective part of stretching, which has the sole purpose of increasing range of motion. Here you need very quantifiable goals, and ways to track your progress.

On the other hand, there is the subjective world of stretching. Here you are not trying necessarily to get more mobile, but you are looking for qualities like awareness, suppleness, gracefulness, and specially to work on your mind by working on your body, as you realize they are not separate.

What is surprising to most is that you can develop one area in spite of the other. I don't know if you have met a very flexible person who is still stiff, but there are some. That quality of being "like water", as Bruce Lee said it, is an art by itself that we will not go into full detail right now.

The only thing I want you to understand right now is that **all attributes in the body are a function of the mind**. Pavel Tsatsouline shows us the application of this: if you stand and take one leg to your side, you will most likely be able to reach an object at your hip level, like a table. Even though you can do this with both legs independently, why can you do it with both and reach a split? There are no cross muscles between the legs that you "need to stretch". It is a matter of lack of trust. When the body doesn't have the enough strength or control, the sufficient memory with the position, or it has an underlying injury, the nervous system restricts a range of motion to protect itself.

So, if you really want to do this right, you need to know that the objective part of stretching should not be separated from the subjective part. **All stretching is a negotiation**, one where you gradually convince your mind and body that a certain position is safe.

Having said that, what are the fundamental stretching positions in gymnastics? They are:

- Pike
- Pancake
- Bridge
- Front split
- Side split
- Shoulder extension
- Squat (the one is more from Weighlifting, but still a crucial one)

Even though some of these movements might seem impossible at this moment for some of you, when you narrow down your goals like this and you use the right tools, you'll be surprised to see how fast you progress. I truly believe everybody can and should have a split, and this is a range our hips have and crave for beautiful and powerful movement within ourselves. You *had* this type of ranges when you were a kid, which means that something along the way created this artificial stiffness that you now feel. If you focus on those 6 movements, you will have the necessary flexibility to do almost any practice that you want. You can have that split too!

#### 4. THE METHODS



Remember Van Damme?

Many people got into serious flexibility training after seeing him in his famous split. He showed that a tough guy with flexibility is even more badass, as he has mastered the art of opposites. Let's analyze the position above.

For the suspended middle split you need a combination of things. First of all, you need adductors that lengthen at the same time that they contract just enough to keep you suspended. This is why what you see above is the perfect example of what we want: a nice mix of strength and flexibility.

How do you get to do this type of positions? If you take a look at it, many of the positions used in Weightlifting are actually partial movements of the fundamental gymnastics stretching positions. For example:

- A side split is a really wide squat
- A front split is a really long split jerk position

This means that one could train the flexibility positions like strength moves, for example starting with a squat and widening it until you get into a side split.

But this is just one of many flexibility methods. Let's have a quick overview of them:

### **Dynamic**

Dynamic stretches increase dynamic flexibility. An example of this would be high kicks and arm swings. If you want to practice disciplines like Martial arts, you need to train this specific flexibility.

### **Ballistic**

This type of stretches increase passive flexibility. They use a little bit of momentum to overcome our current range of motion, so you bounce into a position, the body pulls you out of it, and you repeat that for high volume, accumulating little by little time in a new range of motion. This type of stretching has been done for milenia on countries like China and, if you know how to do it, it can be safe and very effective.

### **Active**

This stretches increase our active flexibility. They combine controlled movements with static positions, and require strength to hold the stretches. This flexibility is very important in certain practices like ballet.

### **Isometric**

This increases our passive flexibility. It should be conceived like strength training and be programmed as such. You use your own bodyweight or an external weight to increase your strength at the end of your range of motion, and it usually leads to the positions being comfortable enough for you to be able to do them any time, without the need of a warm up.

### **PNF**

This is more a protocol than can be used with various methods than a method in and of itself. You manipulate your nervous system responses to stretching to increase flexibility.

For example, you get into an stretch and, when you cannot move any further, you contract the muscles until they have no choice but to relax, and then repeat that in a new range. This also has the advantage of increasing your strength in that range.

### **Relaxed**

This is the type of stretching most people think of when they want to increase their flexibility. You try to relax in a lengthened position and, as we saw, this kind of stretching can be wonderful to work on the subjective side of stretching, but to increase your range of motion it is probably the least effective.

If you understand well this scheme, now you have sufficient tools to vary your flexibility training and enhance a productive response. Even though the best flexibility goals come from Gymnastics, for adults the best flexibility methods come from Weightlifting. If you use isometric stretches with the PNF protocol as your main practice, ballistic stretches for overcoming plateaus and relaxed stretches for exploring your body / mind, you will surely accomplish many of your flexibility goals. Of course, if you need to increase your active or dynamic flexibility, you need to do specific stretches for those goals, but increasing your passive range of motion will create more potential for all other types of flexibility.



This is how chilled your body should be in any position. It shows that it dominates that range, as it has the strength and control to get into and out of it.

## 5. CONCLUSION

There are various main points I want you to get out of this guide. The most important ones are:

- Stop separating flexibility from strength.
- With the right tools, you can get very flexible as an adult.
- The best mix is having the goals from Gymnastics, but using the methods from Weightlifting.
- All range of motion is a manifestation of the trust level that your body feels in a certain position. Working on your body is working on your mind, and viceversa.

So, are you going to accept this call? I have written this book to show you that there is a better way, but it is now your turn to make a choice. It doesn't have to be radical, you can just start incorporating some of the principles laid out in this book little by little.

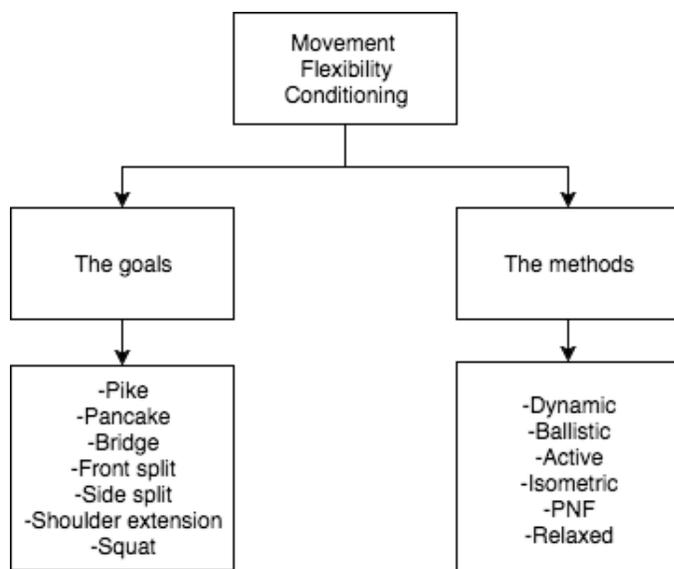
**Remember: even the enormous Ganges is born out of a little fond that, drop after drop, goes on generating a great river.**

Would you rather keep lying on the floor trying to grab your toes and thinking that you are condemned to be forever stiff? The bigger picture is not the flexibility conditioning that this books offers, but the widder world of movement that awaits for you out there.

But we have to start somewhere. Probably you want to have the freedom to go a have a cathartic deadlift session or to survive a martial arts class, or maybe play with your children and being able to fully engage in the moment, only worrying about learning new movements but not about being physically incapable of responding to whatever life throws

at you. There is something liberating about going to a contemporary dance class and knowing that your body is prepared to do anything that it is faced with, where your only job is to align your mind and soul with this reality.

**We want life to be an skill challenge, not a flexibility one.**



The proposal in a nutshell

This is the road I offer you. Blending this Goals with this Methods is the way to go for Movement Flexibility Conditioning. I know it works, it has proven to do with myself and many others through history. It is a road full of excitement, amazement and growth. I still remember the moment I actually felt that my body was capable and adaptable, it was fascinating, remarkable and scary at the same time, and I want you too feel that with me. You were a kid, so deep inside it's all about remembering.

**Will you join us, or remain in the world of Separation?**

## **6. FUTHER EDUCATION**

I know trowing all this at you might be overwelming at first, because I have gone through the process myself. Learning and processing all of this stuff took way more that it was necessary, but now I am glad it happened because I can help YOU in this journey.

This is why I have created a video course to put you well on your way to master the art of Flexibility. This is composed of almost 200 hours of video teaching you the movements and methods for you to get as flexible as you'll ever need. If you are interested in this opportunity, click [here](#) to know more.

### **Learn more about Kinema Project**



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