Hip Mobility

by Dave Hedges
Disclaimer
The exercises and advice contained within this manual may be too difficult or dangerous for some people, and the reader(s) should consult a Doctor before engaging in this or any other exercise program.
The author and publisher of this book are not responsible in any manner whatsoever for any injury which may occur through reading and following the instructions herein.
Above all else, use common sense.

Hip Mobility
By Dave Hedges / May 2016
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The Introduction:

Shakira said it best when she told us that “the hips don't lie”

And she knows a thing or two about wiggling her hips.

But OK, we don't all want to be belly dancing pop princesses, some of us are of a slightly more rugged cut.

But does that mean we shouldn't still have good hip mobility?

Does that mean we shouldn't be able to freely manoeuvre our pelvis and by extension, the legs and the spine that emanate from it?

Absolutely not!

I grew up as a young lad learning Karate being told how the hips are the source of power for our punches and kicks.

We spent time stretching and opening them to improve our kicking ability AND to increase our footwork and movement around the mat.

That was before I found my way into the weight room, where I learned the power clean, discovered the concept 2 rowing machine (yup, they had those things even back then!) and eventually as the years went by, the kettlebell.

If we want good power output, we need good hip mobility.

If we want to be able to change direction quickly, we need good hips.

If we want to save our knees from a world of pain, we need good hips.

Of course there's more to it than just being able to contort ourselves into pretzels and round house kick Storm Troopers in the head.

Mobility is the combination of strength and range of motion.
Being flexible, is not being mobile. Mobility is having full control of your range of motion.

Which is why this workout may look, and feel, a little different to the mobility practices you're used to.

This one sucks.

It is hard.

It takes effort.

You will be sore.

You will be tired.

But you will develop a range of motion and control that you've previously never achieved.

The drills chosen to make up this program come from a variety of sources. And I like to credit my sources.

Obviously, with my personal background, there are martial arts influences here. My Karate was taught to me by the late Jack Parker who laid the foundation for everything I've become as a coach.

But I've also travelled and trained with many other martial artists including a handful of Chinese Wu Shu guys, with the FIFSO Silat guys in Paris and a lot more besides.

Emmett Louis is an acrobat / circus guy who helped me better understand real flexibility and mobility. (drill 7, plus much of the thinking behind the method)

Steve Cotter, the kettlebell "guru" with a long and dedicated history of Chinese Kung Fu training.

And a man named Gary Ward (drills 1-4) and his Anatomy in Motion method. If you've not heard of Anatomy in Motion yet, you should make the effort.

Between these influences I've learned a lot about the potential of the human
body, the manner in which it adapts and how best to stimulate this adaptation.

Methods that have been proven to work, even if we can't fully explain why they work.

But our current best thinking is that we are trying to let the central nervous system know that it is safe for the body to move a certain way, to open a joint a few extra degrees, and we do this by adding strength to movement. We teach the muscles to contract at their end ranges so that the CNS knows it's safe there and can go a touch further.

We don't force the hips open, we tease them.

We don't demand extra range of motion, we ask for it.

And if we ask persistently and patiently, it will be granted.

So enough rabbiting on, turn the page and begin the program.....
The Program:

This will not be easy, so take your time with it.

We’re using a clock rather than counting reps so that we can focus in the quality of each rep rather than trying get as many reps as possible.

Rest periods are up to you, remember this about improving movement not “getting a workout” or “getting a pump”

Do this 2-4 times per week, non consecutive days.

Use your existing available range of motion, push into discomfort, but not pain.

Try to go a touch deeper in every rep, use strength to pull yourself into every position, this is not a wishy washy flexibility routine, this takes effort and grind.

Now that that's said, here we go:

1: Sagittal Cogs x 1 Min [https://youtu.be/on3yO5PBBUE](https://youtu.be/on3yO5PBBUE)

2: Frontal Cogs x 1min [https://youtu.be/dCYNcQsUI_c](https://youtu.be/dCYNcQsUI_c)

3: AiM Squat (movement quality focus) x 1 Min each leg

4: Transverse Hamstring (use a variety of arm reaches)x 1 Min each leg [https://youtu.be/G_Ctjq7c5nA](https://youtu.be/G_Ctjq7c5nA)

5: Frog Stretch 1 Min in each position (hands, elbows, leg outstretched)

1-5 is a 10 minute total mobility set.

1 round of this circuit is sufficient.

6A: Dragon Lunge with pulse x 1 minute [https://youtu.be/gbfcRAE8Kiw](https://youtu.be/gbfcRAE8Kiw)

6B: Lizard 1 with pulses x 1 minute [https://youtu.be/oFuKPYUegeE](https://youtu.be/oFuKPYUegeE)

Repeat 6A & 6B as a superset for 3-5 rounds

7: Horse Stance x 10 pulses, hold last one for up to 1 minute, 3 rounds [https://youtu.be/oQdarmv8jgE](https://youtu.be/oQdarmv8jgE)

And that's it.
Treat this like any other workout / strength session. Do your recovery work, hydrate, foam roll, move and keep loose.

It's a good idea to do a period of movement immediately after completing the workout as “cool down”, so if you're a fighter, do some kicking. If you're a rugby player, do some agility drills. You get the idea.

Before you jump into it, turn the page and take a look at each exercise and why we're using them.
The Exercises:

Sagittal Cogs

These opening exercises, the Cogs drills, come from Gary Ward and his Anatomy in Motion method.

While we use these for rehabilitative purposes, they also fit right here. As our hips and shoulder girdles are interlinked and have an opposing relationship in movement, if one is tight, the other has no chance. And this drill is one of the best exercises I've ever come across for loosening the spine, the chest and restoring the relationship between the pelvis and shoulder girdles.

While there is a lot going here, simply think of turning the hands and allowing the rest of the body to follow naturally.

Here's the video demonstration: https://youtu.be/on3yO5PBBUE
Frontal Cogs

Still working into the spine and the relationship between the pelvis and shoulder girdles, we have the frontal cogs.

When we reach our hand upwards, have the feeling that it is pulling the opposite heel of the floor. If you can't feel the pull, lift the heel anyway, but in time try to have the heel lift become a passive action.

In my head, when I practice this I imagine climbing an invisible rope ladder, this helps me to constantly strive to reach further upwards each time.

Here's the video demonstration: https://youtu.be/dCYNcQsUl_c
AiM Squat (movement quality focus)

More here from Gary Ward and the Anatomy in Motion method. Now we've opened the spine with the cog drills, we now look to start loading the hips.

There are some very important considerations here to make this drill work. First is, we're NOT interested in the depth we reach in the squat. What is important is controlling our centre of mass. The load bearing foot MUST stay flat on the box, with most of the weight moving towards the big toe knuckle (1st Met head) as we lower into the squat.

The loaded hip will remain high with the unloaded hip dropping. As we try to stay tall, we'll put a nice lateral flexion through the spine.

Done with control and attention you will feel the glutes, the entire quad, especially the VMO and maybe even the calf load up.

Here’s the video demonstration: [https://youtu.be/fJ-KMyBP2Hs](https://youtu.be/fJ-KMyBP2Hs)
Transverse Hamstring (use a variety of arm reaches)

This is a little known dynamic hamstring stretch. With the rotational aspect of the stretch we find it can get deep into the glutes including the often troublesome piriformis muscle.

Keep the working leg (trousers rolled up leg) loaded throughout the drill, rotate the pelvis over the loaded leg. This hip internal rotation should drive an external rotation down the to foot where it will lift the arch. Once the basic rotation is dialled in, start reaching in various directions to move the stretch around.

Here's the video demonstration: https://youtu.be/G_Ctjq7c5nA
Frog Stretch 1 Min in each position (hands, elbows, leg outstretched)

Now we start to pry the hips open. This is a dynamic drill, we rock back into the stretch and then forwards to release it. Focus more on the push back before “springing” forwards out of the stretch. After a few pulses you may feel the stretch ease, in which case you may push further back or allow the knees to slide out a touch wider. Each time the body grants you a little extra movement, go with it.

There are 3 basic positions to work through:

Arms Straight:

On the elbows:
With a leg extended perpendicular to the body:

**Dragon Lunge with pulse**

This is a walking lunge drill that comes from the Kung Fu systems. By stepping across the midline, turning the lead foot out and bringing the rear knee to the floor beside the lead ankle will open up the lateral (outside) of the quads and even the IT band.

Pulse in and out of the bottom position for around 3 reps before raising up and stepping forwards.

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Here's the video demonstration: [https://youtu.be/gbfcRAE8Kiw](https://youtu.be/gbfcRAE8Kiw)
Lizard 1 with pulses

The Lizard Crawl had gained a lot of popularity of late as movement and callisthenics training has come to the fore.

But there is nothing new to these movements. The Lizard Crawl is taught and practised in a set of progressions, but in my experience it is this first stage that has the most value to most people. As we're looking to open the hips, we're going to allow our hip to drop towards the floor, pulsing in and out of this position for around 3 reps before stepping forwards.

Watch the tutorial carefully, and be sure to keep the hand directly under the shoulder for a vertical arm.

Here's the video demonstration: https://youtu.be/oFuKPYUegeE
Horse Stance

And now the piece de resistance....

This is a classic hip opening stretch common to the traditional martial arts, gymnasts and acrobats the world over.

To start turn the feet out, heels, toes, heels toes until you finish in a toes out horse stance.

Usually we start toes first to give us a 5 step stance.
If you go heels first, you get an even number, for example 6.

This stepping should allow a method of standardisation to ensure we make solid progress. As you're hips open, you may go from a 5 step to a 6 step, even a 7 step stance.

Once in position, squat down till you feel the stretch.
Now pulse deeper into the stretch, use strength here, actively pull yourself down with strength.

Here's the video demonstration: [https://youtu.be/oQdarmv8igE](https://youtu.be/oQdarmv8igE)
The Last Bit:

So you've read the Intro, looked at the program and studied the exercises. You have haven't you?

The devil is in the detail here, if you choose to anything other than follow the instructions carefully, then you're on your own.

The exercises from Gary Wards Anatomy in Motion are precise, but if done as per instructions will work absolute wonders for your body. If you go to his website, http://www.findingcentre.co.uk/, you'll see what I mean about the power of his work.

A note about frequency here

You will need a minimum of 1 to 2 days off between sessions. The initial drills (1-4) can be done daily, and in many cases should be.

But after that you will need to allow the body time to recover.

More is not better, it's just more.

Better is better

Keep an eye on quality.

Park your ego.

Eliminate any expectations.

Allow your body to let you know when to progress and when to back off.

And if you've any questions, drop me an email to dave@wildgeesema.com

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www.WG-Fit.com
The Bit About The Author:

Hi I'm Dave and I shout at people

At the time of writing I am:
  • IKFF Master trainer for Ireland
  • Anatomy in Motion Practitioner
  • A rusty black belt in a few martial arts
  • IUKL Kettlebell coach
  • Personal trainer
  • Dad
  • Husband
  • and probably something else I've forgotten about

My Gym is called Wild Geese Fitness Training, you can read more about that as well as browse my blog and buy my other eBooks. Here's the link: www.Wg-Fit.com

I also do online training by way of Exercise.com
The link is: http://www.exercise.com/trainers/wgmadave/join

Thanks for reading this eBook, and don't forget to get in touch if you have questions.