

# Learn to Train

## Warm Up and Flexibility Activities

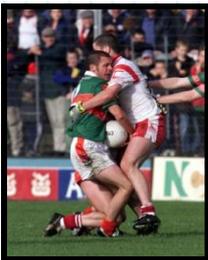
Ulster GAA

Coaching & Games Development

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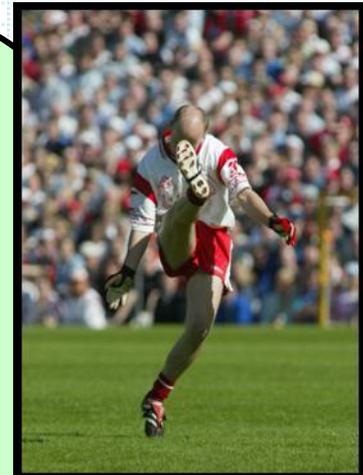


# Learn to Train



# Flexibility ..... Windows for Development

- ✓ Flexibility or suppleness is a key training and performance factor
- ✓ A lack of flexibility around the major joints especially the hamstrings is probably the main reason why so many Gaelic players are injured
- ✓ Sport-specific flexibility should be established at an early training age
- ✓ Monitoring flexibility should be a key factor before and after the onset of PHV
- ✓ It should be a part of regular-muscular-screening of pubertal growth spurts
- ✓ Prior to the onset of PHV, dynamic mobility and stretching should be emphasised
- ✓ During and after PHV, dynamic mobility, static stretching and PNF (proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation) is recommended
- ✓ Flexibility training should be carried out 5/6 times per week for improvement
- ✓ To maintain flexibility 2/3 sessions per week is adequate or training every other day
- ✓ These should be seen as separate sessions in their own right and a good time to do them is along with your core stability work



Peter Canavan  
showing great flexibility  
in the hamstrings



Measuring Flexibility

## Flexibility ..... Windows for Development

- ✓ **Static stretching should be removed from warm ups as it is reported that it does not prevent injuries.**
- ✓ **Pulse raising linked with dynamic mobility i.e. vigorous swinging of the limbs and finally dynamic stretching should be the order for your warm ups**
- ✓ **A light jog with skips followed by some gentle mobility exercises should suffice after training**
- ✓ **This could be followed by warm and cold showers of 30 secs. each**
- ✓ **Static stretching or PNF should be performed 1-2 hours before or 2 hours after training or competition**
- ✓ **These stretches should be held 10 seconds and repeated three times for each muscle group.**
- ✓ **To improve flexibility stretches should be held for 30 secs. and repeated 3-4 times in order to improve flexibility**
- ✓ **Like any habit the earlier we can get children into a routine the easier it is to maintain this into adulthood**
- ✓ **Children under 8 yrs. do not need stretching.**



**Hamstring Stretch**

## Flexibility ..... Windows for Development

### Exercise 1: Hamstring Mobilising

- ✓ Standing sideways, hold something rigid like a fence, wall or partner.
- ✓ Start swinging your outside leg and gradually make bigger and bigger swings.
- ✓ Engage the core, keep the back straight and swing from the hip.
- ✓ Change and repeat for the other leg.
- ✓ Kick as high and straight as possible
- ✓ Excellent hamstring stretch and mimicks the punt kick

### Exercise 2: Dynamic Stretch of the Hamstrings

- ✓ The hamstring is now ready for stretching
- ✓ Stand one foot in front of the other
- ✓ Bend back leg at the knee and lower your bottom as if sitting on stool.
- ✓ Ease you chest toward your thigh, bending at the hips
- ✓ Keep the back straight and head up and weight on back leg.
- ✓ Don' stay in the position too long
- ✓ Repeat on other leg and do this 5 to 6 time



Hip Mobility –  
knee up and out

## Flexibility ..... Windows for Development

### Exercise 3: Quadriceps Mobilising:

- ✓ Stand sideways to a wall with your near hand against the wall
- ✓ Swing your outside foot to and fro
- ✓ As it comes up behind attempt to flick it up vigorously to kick butt
- ✓ Repeat a set number of times before repeating with the other leg

### Exercise 4: Dynamic Stretch Of The Quads:

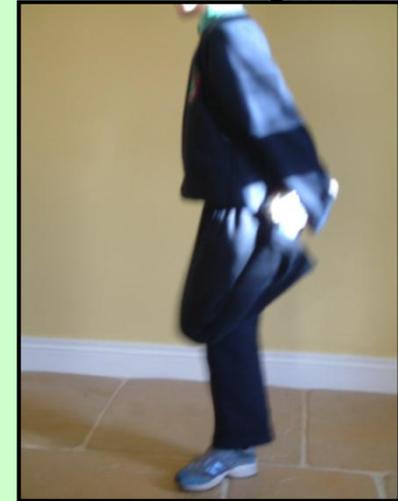
1. While walking flick one foot up behind you and grab it with the same hand
2. Push this foot into your hand (not foot into bottom)
3. Now push the hip bone forward to stretch the quads and repeat for the other leg etc.

### Exercise 5: Calf Muscles: Top Calf

- ✓ Face wall with both hands high up the wall
- ✓ Your body should be as straight as possible
- ✓ Start bending at the knees to force the heels just to come off the ground
- ✓ Drive your heels back down onto the ground each time to help stretch the upper calf muscle

### Exercise 6: Lower Calf Muscle:

- ✓ Same starting position as above but hands are a little lower
- ✓ Stand one foot in front of the other
- ✓ Bend both knees as you tuck pelvis down and forward towards the wall
- ✓ Lift the front leg and place it over the back leg for a better stretch on the lower calf
- ✓ Repeat this action in quick succession a set number of times
- ✓ N.B. This is a difficult stretch and takes a lot of practice to get it right



Quad Stretch

## Flexibility ..... Windows for Development

### Exercise 7: Groin: Inner (Adductors)

- ✓ Walking bring your right knee up in front of the body and hold the outside of the knee with your left hand and pull it across your body to help stretch the inner groin
- ✓ Step forward and repeat with other leg a set number of times

### Exercise 8: Outer Thigh Muscles: (Abductors)

- ✓ Same as above except that the same knee as the same hand pulls the knee away from the body
- ✓ Step forward and repeat with the other leg a set number of times

### Exercise 9: Hip Flexor Muscles:

- ✓ Walk with big steps keeping both hips facing forwards while pushing hips forward

### Mistakes to watch out for - Unsafe Stretches:

1. Standing toe touch
2. Full head rotation
3. Straight leg lifts while laying on back
4. Back arching



Inner thigh and groin