



**STADION**® news  
Training Info for Serious Athletes

<http://www.stadion.com>

Volume 14, Number 3, Summer 2007

\$3.00

**New DVD Released:**  
*Clinic on Stretching and Kicking with Tom Kurz*



Many people, mostly young martial artists, told us that they cannot afford our *Secrets of Stretching* DVD and *Power High Kicks with No Warm-Up!* DVD, especially with the high costs of shipping to foreign countries. So, we have released a DVD that contains the most essential information on stretching and kicking and packaged this DVD in a very small and economical case. This lowers our costs to produce and ship the DVD, and the savings can be passed to you, our customers.

This DVD is *Clinic on Stretching and Kicking*, and it contains video of two clinics conducted by Thomas Kurz.

You can watch never before seen footage of Thomas Kurz explaining the secrets of stretching and kicking, showing how he actually practices kicks and how he stretches, correcting common errors made by martial artists.

Here is what is on this DVD:

**Part I: How to Stretch for Kicking**

**Part II: Sample Workout for Kickers**

You will see...

- The dynamic stretch that is most important for kickers (no, it is not the leg raise to the front)
- The essential details of side kick and roundhouse kick that will let you kick high and with power without any warm-up
- Step-by-step drills for front kick, side kick, and roundhouse kick and for combinations of kicks and punches
- Corrections of common errors that keep you from throwing powerful high kicks with ease
- Tips on the static stretch that is most important for all martial artists (but especially for kickers)
- Simple exercises that combine developing strength and flexibility for martial arts

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STADION NEWS is published by Stadion Publishing Co., Inc., P.O. Box 447, Island Pond, VT 05846, U.S.A.  
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**Early Reviews of *Clinic on Stretching and Kicking***

"I did get your DVD and I thought it was excellent. The content is fantastic. Shortly after I started watching the DVD in our living room, my wife wandered through and was immediately drawn to it. I think you've got a great product."  
—Tim Schmidt, Founder—U.S. Concealed Carry, Jackson, Wisconsin

"The content is great [even] if the recording footage quality is a little poor. Overall, it's an extremely useful addition to the already impressive line-up."  
—Shane Fitzgibbon, [www.connacht-taekwondo.com](http://www.connacht-taekwondo.com)

"I think one of the most important aspects of this video is watching you correct common mistakes that the students were making."  
—Mark Meloon, Santa Barbara, California

"It contains some very valuable information. . . . I recommend this excellent DVD to all martial artists and athletes who want to improve their flexibility and kicking skills and get some excellent training tips as well. Your ideas as far as how to modify some of the conventional drills and stances for better effectiveness were right on the mark."  
—Richard J. Vahl, MSc, DC, PhD, San Diego, California

## Tom Kurz on his new DVD

by Thomas Kurz

I get many questions on stretching and kicking or on flexibility for kickers, and on the technique of kicking itself.

A long time ago I did a few clinics or seminars for martial artists of the kick-and-punch persuasion (karate, TKD, etc.).

Some of these clinics were videotaped, but I felt no urgency to publish these videos. With few exceptions, the people attending these clinics were not serious about training—even though every time I asked the organizers to make sure only serious martial artists attended. Nevertheless, every time I would find myself in front of people who joined m.a. schools as cheaper alternatives to fitness clubs, or because of the need to “belong.” Often there were also kids who were brought there by parents and were present in body only.

Most of these people showed up at my clinics because the organizing instructor told them to, not because they were strongly motivated, inquisitive athletes, looking for ways to make their training more effective. I said “most of these people” because there were a few who were a pleasure to work with and who actually applied the know-how I presented. With those few exceptions I considered my instruction to be wasted and decided not to do more clinics.

So why have I decided to finally release videos of two such clinics? Because regardless of the uninspiring attendees, I still taught and demonstrated as best I could, so my instruction videotaped at these clinics answers many questions on both the stretching and the kicking.

**On this DVD you’ll find answers to questions like these:**

- How to warm up for kicking
- When to do static stretches
- How to do the best isometric stretch for the side splits
- How to do side raises so your hips don’t hurt
- What the horse-riding stance and the side kick have in common
- What the knee kick, front kick, side kick, and roundhouse kick all have in common
- How a very popular form of the roundhouse kick sets you up to be knocked out
- What position of your foot gives more power and snap to your side kick—and lets you kick higher
- How you should chamber for the roundhouse kick
- How to stretch for splits without pain
- How to reduce telegraphing of your kicks and punches
- How to protect yourself from low kicks
- How punches help to land kicks

**And solutions to problems like this:**

“My instructor pointed out yesterday that my side kicks have a bit of a roundhouse motion to them. This has been an off-again/on-again problem for me throughout the years and greatly diminishes the effectiveness of my side kicks. Does anyone have a suggestion for drills that I can do to eliminate this problem once and for all?”

**Or like this:**

“I wonder if someone can help me with this. When I perform a roundhouse kick I can rotate my foot right around so it’s facing the opposite direction, but I find my knee is pointing too far to the left or right (depending on which side I’m kicking from).

“I know my knee should be pointing forward, and when I extend the lower part of my leg it should arc round.

“What, if any, exercises can anyone suggest that would help me do this, please, or will practicing this kick over and over again give me the answers I need?”

**Or like this:**

“I can perform all the basic kicks including roundhouse and spinning kicks and jumping spin kicks (made popular by Van Damme). The only kick I can’t do right is the side kick. My kick tends to fall down (*i.e.*, recoil is poor), and my knees too don’t go high. My side kick doesn’t have that snap like that of Bruce Lee. It looks more like a John Saxon-type heaving kick. Please recommend some training tips so that I can correct this fault.”

**Learn more about this DVD and view its video trailer at [www.stadion.com](http://www.stadion.com).**



## Flexibility for American Football (and for other sports)

by Thomas Kurz

There is much discussion whether more flexibility helps or hurts an athlete. Researchers do studies and meta studies, with conclusions that are usually obvious and of no use for an individual athlete. (Say, a female gymnast learns that above-average flexibility predisposes one to injuries—but her sport is about having the above-average flexibility!) Then assorted experts opine one way or the other, while the answer, and a decision whether to increase one's flexibility or not, is simple. It can be put in two sentences:

1. It depends on the athlete.
2. Training is a process.

An increased range of motion (ROM), or flexibility, is not like an irreversible affliction one cannot get rid of. If this increase was done with rational training, then it can be undone, also with rational training. Yes, with rational training one can increase the ROM or decrease it, depending on the need.

Now, for specifics, here is my answer to a question from one football player and a comment from another football player:

Mr. Kurz, I am a college football player, and I want to maximize my potential as an athlete. I have very good natural abilities, such as speed, strength, and agility, but I feel that I could be much better if I became more flexible. My question for you is do you think that your DVD *Secrets of Stretching* will be helpful for a football player like me? I'm a bigger guy, and right now it seems impossible for me to even think about doing the splits. Also, I don't even know if being able to do the splits is healthy for me as a football player. Could you please give me some feedback, so that I can make the decision to buy this DVD or not. It looks and seems very intriguing and helpful, but I wanted to hear your input for an athlete like myself. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Ryan

**Answer:** You know best if greater flexibility of your hips would help you on the field.

If you were running straight ahead only—no evasions, no interceptions, or other maneuvers—then having extra flexibility would not be likely to help you. But playing American football you have to do all these maneuvers and move in unpredictable ways, combining running, dodging, intercepting, slamming into people, and grappling, so more flexibility of the hips and legs can give you greater freedom of movements.

If you follow my program on the DVD *Secrets of Stretching*, I see no danger of developing great flexibility without good joint stability. After all, one of the main points of this DVD is showing how to strengthen the hips and legs while increasing their flexibility. Perhaps you should ask your coach to view a flash movie at [www.stadion.com/secretst\\_stretching.html](http://www.stadion.com/secretst_stretching.html) and photos at [www.stadion.com/photos.html](http://www.stadion.com/photos.html). Both the video and the photos show a healthy combination of flexibility, joint integrity, and strength.

Best regards,  
Thomas Kurz

One of the Stadion e-mail list subscribers, Matt Baniewicz, CSCS (Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist) and a former football player, has sent this comment:

I am a former college football player from the University at Buffalo. I played offensive guard. I was the smallest offensive lineman on my team, but the best in terms of production. My quickness and speed were comparable to some of my teammates at the same position. My strength and power were also comparable. But my hip and hamstring flexibility was far superior to those who played my position as well as the players from the so-called "skill" positions. This made a huge difference in terms of my technique. A lot of stiff football players are not even able to practice or execute proper technique because of limited range of motion. What made me good was my technique. I had better agility than most players my size because I could bend with ease. Anyone who was on my team will tell you the same story. I would recommend *Stretching*

*Scientifically* and *Secrets of Stretching* for you. Keep in mind that you are a football player, not a martial artist. Use these tools as a guide. I have been studying sports training for 12 years now, and these tools are the BEST references for flexibility training I have ever seen.

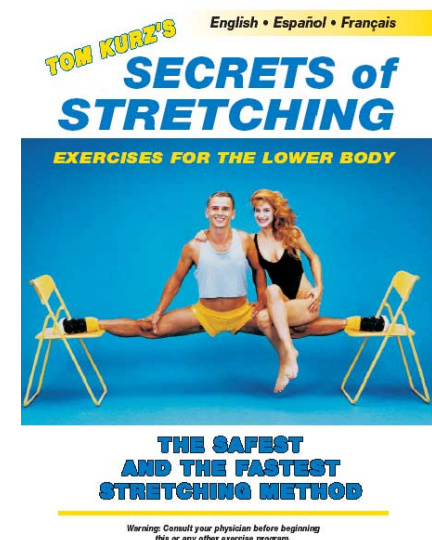
Sincerely,  
Matt Baniewicz, CSCS

Matt Baniewicz puts it well: "Keep in mind that you are a football player, not a martial artist. Use these tools as a guide." This applies to all sports and all sound training methods—for strength, for speed, for endurance, for flexibility, and so on.

If a method works for one sport, it will work for another, as long as adjustments are made to suit the sport's specifics.

In the case of using my flexibility training method in football, a player is not going to try to obtain the ROM needed for martial arts' high kicks. A football player doesn't need that ROM. He needs to have a sufficient ROM for all his football techniques, dynamic flexibility within that ROM, and so much strength and muscle endurance at his full ROM as to make him virtually muscle-strain proof.

So, the method that lets one do hanging splits and get up from splits by the strength of one's stretched muscles alone seems helpful—even though the player may not need the splits.



# Q and A on STRETCHING and TRAINING

Study these questions on training carefully. You may find information that relates to questions of yours. Questions are in *italics*.

■ *I am a 40-year-old guy who 2 and a half years ago returned to taekwondo after an 18-year layoff. My flexibility in this 2-year period has not really improved as a result of the taekwondo. In the last 2 years at TKD I have had problems with left and right hamstrings, front and back of knees, left adductor, and my right hip flexor.*

*I suspect that my body is not strong enough as 5 years ago I had Guillain-Barre Syndrome. However I have gone to the gym regularly for the last 2 years, so I would have thought that the muscle strength has been regained.*

*My training problems seem to occur when I increase loads or push myself harder. On some days I can perform up to 100 adductor flies, but I can hardly do 20 leg raises that Mac shows for the hip flexors.*

I do not advise doing long sets of adductor flies on the same day with long sets of lying leg raises.

In a long-term program (not in a single workout!), long sets of lying leg raises are to be done as a preparation for shorter sets of hanging leg raises, and those prepare for work on thigh adductors (inner thigh muscles). You know that from *Secrets of Stretching*. Short sets of these exercises, with greater resistance and not to exhaustion, can be done in one workout, with adductor flies preceding the hanging leg raises.

In both the adductor flies and the leg raises, hip flexors are much involved. In adductor flies they help the adductors, and in leg raises they are the main movers. If you do leg raises (lying or hanging) after an exhausting set of adductor flies, then your hip flexors may be too tired.

If you do your strength workout twice a week or every other day, try doing these exercises on separate days—one strength workout with leg raises for hip flexors, the second with adductor flies. (Do not do such strength workouts on consecutive days!). If that does not help, then perhaps your hip

flexors are weaker than your adductors. This could be caused by your past illness or by something completely different. Whatever the cause of such weakness, my advice is to see a physician specializing in **applied kinesiology**.

■ *I have a couple of questions:*

1) *Our gym does not have any ankle weights or iron boots for doing adductor flies, and I have cleared the first level of doing adductor flies without weights for more than 100 reps without a break. What should I do next? Do I continue free of weight, or do we have any alternative for it? I need to mention that I have the provision to do adductor pulls.*

2) *When I climb a staircase I usually climb alternate steps. I don't know why, but I have been doing this since I was 10 years old and now I am 27 years. Would that have any impact on the strength and flexibility of my legs? Is that an equivalent to lunging forward?*

1) If you believe you need to further strengthen your inner thighs before doing isometric stretches for side splits, you can do adductor pull-downs. You can also try the isometric stretch in the horse-riding stance, using only as much tension as you feel safe. I show this stretch on the DVD *Secrets of Stretching* and on the DVD *Clinic on Stretching and Kicking*.

2) It is not exactly equivalent to the front lunge, but it is good for strengthening thighs and hips—and it prepares you well for isometric stretches. The more steps you take at a time, the more strength you develop at the greater range of movement. Keep your back straight as you climb those stairs. (Straight is not the same as vertical—so you can lean forward, but do not hunch!)

To sum it up: Your adductor flies and stair climbing should give you enough strength for using isometric stretches to reach the side splits and front splits. Deep squats (athletic, sumo, and plié) will help too.

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