

# BALANCE & STRETCH



A VISUAL GUIDE TO WARMING UP - STRETCHING AND  
DEVELOPING BALANCE WITHIN THE TAEKWON-DO TRAINING  
SCHEDULE



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# A VISUAL GUIDE TO WARMING UP - STRETCHING AND DEVELOPING BALANCE WITHIN THE TAEKWON-DO TRAINING SCHEDULE

## WHAT - WHEN - WHY - HOW - WHO?

**WHAT** - What I have endeavoured to offer Taekwon-do students in this guide is a logical quick reference sequence of stretch and balance exercises, which can be easily remembered. Working in top to toe order, down the body, keeps routines simple, accessible and do-able within the training schedule. It is not always possible to implement every single stretch, every time; I have therefore chosen to offer options, keeping in mind that many stretches put focus on combinations of muscle groups, which is more expedient when time is limited.

**WHEN** - When I began Taekwon-do I could barely touch my shins with my finger-tips in a standing forwards fold with straight legs, let alone my toes... or the floor!

Eventually a year or so into my practise, when I could reach the floor with fingers and then palms more comfortably, I had a conversation with my very flexible Taekwon-do instructor Sabum Livingstone, about the benefits stretching gave us in our daily lives. We both agreed that it served to charge our batteries, oil our joints and give us improved sense of wellbeing, not forgetting injury protection and prevention. The conversation inspired me to set goals around my flexibility; one of them was to be able to sit in wide leg seated splits with my chest on the floor in front of me. Whilst almost, almost there now, I know good things take time and think back to when I couldn't touch my toes. In my experience so far my hamstrings have been a little easier to coax than my hips. Hips are in fact the one area I am asked the most questions about - my answer? Keep working on them and be patient.

**WHY** - Often I have the privilege of taking the warm up and stretch at the beginning of a training session. This has made me focus on how to offer students the most beneficial warm-up, stretch and balance routine in the time available. The saying *'the more you learn, the more you realise there is to learn'* has certainly been true in my investigation. In pursuit of an effective, economical stretching routine, I have realised how much time is involved in working out something simple, that can be easily understood and put into daily practise, by students seeking to not only improve their flexibility and strength, but also wishing to train safely and avoid injury. In an ideal world, within training schedules, there would be unlimited time to implement more aspects of stretch and balance, however time is often less than we have available and to reap full benefits, just as we do with Taekwon-do techniques and patterns - we must also practise outside of the Dojang.

**HOW** - I stretch regularly within training sessions and at home. Post JUCHE (the pattern that asked me for more extreme balance - among many things) I began attending a yoga class to improve my knowledge and experience around flexibility and balance. I have learned much about the mechanics of stretching and balance in doing this and also how a few words about where to better put emphasis and focus in postures can improve the benefits immensely. I have definitely become more *'bendy and stable'* and although I still have wobbly moments where it's *'just not happening'*, I am better at controlling them because my stabilising muscles have strengthened and become much more responsive.

**WHO** - I am certainly not an expert on stretching and balance, but I have personally gained much through practise and desire to improve. It pleases me to share knowledge from my experiences this far in the hope that it is helpful to those students wishing to improve in this area, which in turn, will help their Taekwon-do practise and sense of wellbeing.

I am very grateful to those who continue to inspire me and deeply indebted to General Choi Hong Hi - the founder - for the gift of Taekwon-do.

*"The organised training procedures stress a systematic warm-up of muscles and ligaments, increasing blood volume and flow through the muscles. These warming up exercises promote healthy flexibility of joints, tendons and ligaments, as well as serving to prevent injuries in training. The regime also stresses warming down exercises after training to pump down the accumulation of blood and fluid in the muscles after violent exercises. If this is not done stiffness and discomfort will result"*

*(p. 55 Williams JGP "Medical Aspects of Sport & Fitness")*

(p.38 'Taekwon-do the Korean Art of Self Defence' by General Choi Hong Hi)

Note: The Dojang floor can be hard and stretching needs to be achievable for all levels; therefore this is by no means a comprehensive stretch reference and I have not included inverted postures or extreme backbends for safety reasons.

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## Can I become more flexible?

When in wellness and injury free, flexibility can be improved, if stretching is practised regularly. Finding a routine that suits and setting a time frame to check back and see the improvement, is a good way to start. If beginning, always give due respect to any personal limitations that may exist (e.g. bone structure, muscle mass, body mass, connective tissue, and injury or any impeding conditions). It can still be possible to work around injuries, ongoing joint problems, or the like, but it is always wise to consult a health professional.

## Why do we need to stretch?

- The ageing process can stiffen and shorten our tendons and ligaments causing limited range of motion, bent over posture, possible painful joints and slow movements. Stretching can help improve this by extending and lengthening the body and limbs. This helps to develop and maintain a healthy level of flexibility; which refers to the range of motion in which a joint or group of joints can effectively move. Strengthening muscles in a new range of motion stabilises all the tiny muscles around joints that help to hold them together, which in turn will improve posture and wellbeing.

- Exercise can also shorten our range of motion as when muscles are exercised and gain strength they can become shortened, tight and contracted. Stretching can help prevent this and the pain and discomfort that post work out lactic acid build up can cause.

- Stretching will help us to perform and perfect Taekwon-do techniques through an increased sense of wellbeing, enhanced physical fitness, greater flexibility, improved muscle pliability and strength, reduced muscular pain or tension, and heightened body awareness. Not forgetting the reduced risk of potential injury to joints muscles or tendons that can hinder or stop our training.

## Points to keep in mind when stretching.

- Always warm up, as raising core body temperature one or two degrees increases the blood flow to muscles, allowing them to lengthen out without undue stress and also gives access to the more difficult to reach connective tissues.

- Stretching is not the warm up, but is part of warming up for a training session that will help to soften, loosen and lengthen muscles and connective tissue, which in turn will reduce the risk of injury. Long extended stretches at the warm up stage may actually hamper performance as muscles can become slightly fatigued and strength reduced. It is important to remember this and hold stretches for short periods of between 15-30 seconds (or five full breaths), to light tension, but never pain. It is advisable not to bounce in stretches at this point in the warm up, to avoid straining ligaments and tendons or causing little tears in the muscles. Any such tears may heal with scar tissue, which can tighten the muscle, reduce flexibility and increase the potential of future damage and pain.

- After the most aerobic part of training, the heart rate needs to have reduced considerably, and the body needs to be warming down before deeper stretching begins. Stretching after training takes advantage of the body being warm and allows for greater lengthening of muscles, tendons and ligaments. This is the time when stretches can be extended and held for much longer periods and it is a good time to relax, sink fully into each stretch, wind down and reduce tension.

- By warming up and stretching correctly (only to tension) there should be no soreness the next day; if there is, overstretching could be the cause and care then needs to be taken to reduce exertion or the depth of stretching, as increased flexibility and fitness will be hampered while damaged muscles try to repair.

- Proper breath control is as important during stretching as it is in training. It helps to relax the body and increase blood flow, which helps move along any lactic acid that may build up and cause stiffness or soreness following a workout. Breathe deeply through the stretches, relaxing into them on the exhale.

- To prevent injury and stress to joints, avoid locking them when stretching, instead, consciously engage the surrounding muscles, e.g. to protect knee joints in straight legged hamstring stretches; engage the quadriceps then tense the knee cap so that it feels like it is pulling upward towards the thighs.

- Every 'body' is different and it is important to listen to your own, and work to a personal maximum, without risking injury by pushing too far when the body is not ready. Explore your edges in stretches - figure out when to push and when to pull back - only you can know that. Remember that bodies can differ from side to side and day to day - the maximum of yesterday may not be anything like that of today, but every opportunity taken to stretch and strengthen will serve to improve flexibility, enhance performance and give a sense of improved wellbeing.

*"Before any student begins training at least ten to fifteen minutes should be set aside for warming up exercise. The purpose of these preparatory exercises is to limber the joints and muscles, and increase blood circulation. A student who begins strenuous punching, kicking or jumping exercise is very liable to pull or strain ligaments. After a training class ends students should also spend five to ten minutes doing simple warming down exercise to release the body muscles from tension"* p.414 Taekwon-do the Korean Art of Self Defence' by General Choi Hong Hi)

**QUICK REFERENCE SHEET (training schedule will determine timings for each section)**

<p align="center"><b>WARM-UP (JOINT ROTATIONS)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NECK (fwd - back - right to left)</li> <li>• FINGERS - KNUCKLES (flex)</li> <li>• WRISTS(rotate both ways)</li> <li>• ELBOWS (rotate both ways)</li> <li>• SHOULDERS (rotate fwd - back)</li> <li>• CORE - WAIST (twist both ways)</li> <li>• HIPS (rotate both ways)</li> <li>• KNEES (rotate both ways)</li> <li>• LEGS (massage muscles)</li> <li>• ANKLES (rotate both ways)</li> <li>• TOES - FEET (tip toes to heels up &amp; down rocking motion - flex feet)</li> </ul>	<p>Beginning <u>slowly</u> and increasing with comfort level, (<i>excluding the neck</i>) perform circular movements both clockwise and counter-clockwise, until the joint seems to move smoothly. Rotate with control. These rotations increase lubrication and ease of movement for the joint by warming and distributing synovial fluid. Muscles that can be reached can also benefit from being lightly massaged. <u>Note:</u> <i>Take special care of the neck at this warm-up stage. Fingertips on shoulders for shoulder rotations.</i></p>
<p align="center"><b>AEROBIC ACTIVITY</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JOGGING ON THE SPOT</li> <li>• STAR JUMPS</li> <li>• LIGHT JUMPING - KNEES UP</li> <li>• JUMPING TORSO TWISTS</li> </ul>	<p>This is still warming up so perform with care, keeping in mind this is to raise body temperature and encourage more blood flow through the muscles.</p>
<p align="center"><b>STATIC STRETCHING</b></p> <p><u>see further on for specific stretches</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FOREARMS - WRISTS</li> <li>• TRICEPS - BICEPS</li> <li>• SHOULDERS</li> <li>• BACK</li> <li>• CHEST - TORSO</li> <li>• BUTTOCKS - GROINS</li> <li>• HIPS - THIGHS - HAMSTRINGS</li> <li>• CALVES - SHINS</li> <li>• TOES - FEET</li> </ul>	<p>Static stretching executed at this stage reduces the risk of overstretching and injury. Move slowly into the stretch and take deep breaths through the nose holding momentarily, exhaling as the muscle is extending. Hold for just short periods of around 15 seconds. Come back to a neutral position and repeat if desired. It is important not to rush this part of the warm-up as it is preparing the body both physically and mentally.</p>
<p align="center"><b>DYNAMIC STRETCHING</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ARM SWINGS - all directions</li> <li>• LEG RAISES - SWINGS</li> <li>• KICKS - all directions</li> </ul>	<p>Gradually increase range of motion rather than extending out to full range at the start of each exercise. <u>Note:</u> Swing arms with elbows slightly bent, arms and palms facing inwards to protect shoulders.</p>
<b>TRAINING WORKOUT / PAD WORK</b>		
<p align="center"><b>DYNAMIC WARM DOWN</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ARM SWINGS - all Directions</li> <li>• TORSO TWISTS</li> <li>• LEG RAISES - SWINGS</li> </ul>	<p>This is almost the reverse of the dynamic stretch and is why pad work towards the end of a training schedule can be so beneficial, when warmed joints are asked again to extend to the point they would in dynamic stretches.</p>
<p align="center"><b>WARM DOWN &amp; STRETCHING</b></p> <p><u>see further on for specific stretches</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NECK (as in warm-up)</li> <li>• FOREARMS - WRISTS</li> <li>• TRICEPS - BICEPS</li> <li>• SHOULDERS</li> <li>• BACK</li> <li>• CHEST - TORSO</li> <li>• HIPS - BUTTOCKS - GROIN</li> <li>• THIGHS - HAMSTRINGS</li> <li>• CALVES - SHINS</li> <li>• INSTEP - TOPS OF FEET</li> </ul>	<p>Deep breathe to gradually bring the heart rate down. This is the time to maximise muscular and connective tissue readiness and availability to be stretched. Use breath control and keep the mind focused on the area of extension. Move slowly into the stretch and take deep inward breaths. Retain and hold breath momentarily then exhale fully allowing the muscles to relax and sink into the extension. Hold stretches for longer periods (20 seconds to a minute). Take care to stretch only to tension not any pain.</p>

If time allows - At this point a resting time of 1 or 2 minutes sitting comfortably cross legged or laying flat on the back deep breathing, eyes closed, can be extremely valuable in allowing the mind and body to relax, settle and begin to assimilate the benefits of the workout.



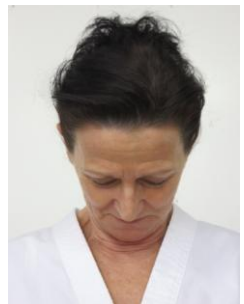
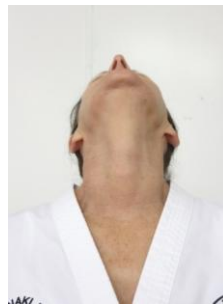
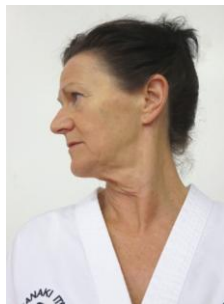
# 1. WARM UP STRETCHES & ROTATIONS



ON TIP TOES INTERLOCK FINGERS & STRETCH ARMS UP WITH PALMS PUSHING HIGH TO CEILING. STRETCH STRONGLY THROUGH TORSO.



FLEX & STRETCH OUT FINGERS - PULL BACK CLENCHING FISTS - CONTROLLING ARMS FLICK FINGERS FORWARDS AS IF FLICKING DROPS OF WATER FROM FINGER TIPS. TO ADD AN EXTRA BENEFIT TO THIS WARM UP - AS FINGERS ARE FLEXED & STRETCHED RAISE UP ONTO TOES & ROCK BACK ON HEELS LIFTING TOES OFF THE FLOOR. DO THIS IN A SYNCHRONISED ROCKING MOTION - CLOSED FISTS WHILE ON HEELS - OUTSTRETCHED FINGERS WHILE ON TOES. EXCELLENT FOR BALANCE.



NECK STRETCHES EITHER SEATED OR STANDING - CHIN TOWARDS LEFT THEN RIGHT. CHIN TOWARDS CEILING THEN DOWN TO CHEST. BE GENTLE ON THE NECK & AVOID ROTATIONS. EARS CAN ALSO BE LOWERED TOWARD SHOULDERS EACH SIDE FOR ADDED WARM UP.



MAKE CONTROLLED ROTATIONS WITH FINGERTIPS RESTING ON SHOULDER. ROTATE ELBOWS IN A CIRCULAR MOTION UP TO CEILING, BACK, & DOWN POINTING TO FLOOR, THEN FORWARDS BRINGING ELBOWS AS CLOSE TO TOUCHING AS POSSIBLE & BACK UP TO THE CEILING, SEVERAL TIMES. REPEAT IN OTHER DIRECTION. SHOULDER JOINTS CAN BE VULNERABLE IF NOT WARMED UP, ESPECIALLY IN COLDER WEATHER, SO RESTING FINGERTIPS ON SHOULDERS WILL HELP CONTROL THE RANGE OF MOTION & PROTECT JOINTS.

## 2. ROTATIONS - AEROBIC ACTIVITY - BALANCE & STRETCH



**WARM UP TORSO (WAIST) ROTATIONS.**  
 WITH CONTROL, SWING ARMS TO THE RIGHT & LEFT. TO PROTECT JOINTS HOLD ARMS & PALMS FACING INWARDS. HAVE FEET FACING FORWARD IN PARALLEL POSITION. AS BODY TURNS TOWARD BACK THE HEAD FOLLOWS. REPEAT SEVERAL TIMES WITH CONTINUED CONTROL. MAINLY TO WARM UP TORSO BUT SHOULDERS - ARMS HIPS - KNEE & ANKLE JOINTS WILL ALSO BENEFIT.



AT THIS POINT OF THE WARM UP, AEROBIC ACTIVITY CAN BE INTRODUCED SUCH AS VERY LIGHT JUMPING TORSO TWISTS, GENTLE JOGGING ON THE SPOT, LIGHT STAR JUMPS. THIS WILL RAISE THE BODY TEMPERATURE MORE & IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN THE COLDER MONTHS WHEN IT TAKES MORE TIME TO WARM UP & PREPARE THE BODY TO TRAIN SAFELY.



**BALANCE & STRETCH** - TAKE ARMS UPWARD & STRETCHING, WITH FINGERTIPS REACHING TALL - LIFT LEG EXTENDING IT BACK, FORWARD & TO THE SIDE AS FAR UP AS IT CAN BE RAISED - HOLD BETWEEN DIRECTIONS - TRY NOT TO PUT FOOT DOWN. KEEP ARMS & LEGS IN LINE. HOLD, PUSHING OUT THROUGH HEEL & FINGERTIPS WHILST MAINTAINING GOOD BALANCE. REPEAT ON OPPOSITE SIDE. IDEALLY REPEAT TWICE. FOR A LITTLE MORE CHALLENGE PUT PALMS TOGETHER.



**BALANCE, ROTATE & STRETCH**  
 TRY TO DO THIS SEQUENCE WITHOUT PUTTING THE FOOT DOWN. DRAW KNEE UP TOWARD THE CHEST.  
 (FAR LEFT) ROTATE ANKLE JOINT ONE WAY - THEN THE OTHER SEVERAL TIMES.  
 (MIDDLE LEFT) HOLDING KNEE UP ROTATE THE LEG FROM THE KNEE DOWN IN CIRCLES BOTH WAYS.  
 (LEFT) KING DANCER PULL FOOT UP IN BEHIND, HOLD ANKLE JOINT WHILST PUSHING IT OUT INTO THE HAND. HOLD. DO BOTH LEGS. FOR MORE CHALLENGE BEND GROUNDED LEG.



### 3. BALANCE & STRETCH



**WARRIOR II STRETCH (LEFT)**  
 WITH FEET APART & HIPS FACING FORWARD, BEND FRONT KNEE KEEPING LEFT LEG STRAIGHT & FOOT AT 90 DEGREES. FRONT HEEL IN LINE WITH MIDDLE OF BACK FOOT. LOOK PAST FINGERTIPS. TUCK IN TAILBONE, ENGAGE ABS, REACH BOTH ARMS OUT STRONGLY & RELAX SHOULDERS.



**SIDE ANGLE VARIATION (RIGHT).** WITH ELBOW ON KNEE, EXTEND OPPOSITE HAND PALM DOWN OUT OVER THE HEAD. HOLD BOTH VARIATIONS 15 TO 30 SECONDS & REPEAT BOTH SIDES.  
 STRETCHES GROIN, CHEST, HIPS. STRENGTHENS THIGHS, GLUTEALS, ANKLES, CORE & SHOULDERS.



**TRIANGLE STRETCH (ABOVE LEFT)** STAND WITH SPINE & LEGS STRAIGHT - FEET WIDER THAN HIPS & ARMS IN LINE WITH SHOULDERS, PALMS DOWN. POINT LEFT FOOT TO FRONT AT 90 DEGREES, RIGHT FOOT POINTED TO RIGHT SIDE WITH HEEL IN LINE WITH CENTRE OF LEFT FOOT. EXTEND ARMS REACHING STRONGLY OUT IN BOTH DIRECTIONS. **EXTENDED VARIATIONS (CENTRE)** BEND AT THE WAIST & DROP RIGHT HAND TO KNEE, SHIN, ANKLE, OR FLOOR. KEEP HIPS FACING FORWARDS, AS IF BETWEEN TWO SHEETS OF GLASS. TOP HIP PUSHING BACK & BOTTOM HIP FORWARDS. LOOK UP TOWARDS HAND. HOLD. TAKE BICEP OVER EAR. HOLD. **FOR REVOLVED TRIANGLE (FAR RIGHT)** - TURN TORSO TO FACE BACK & PLACE LEFT PALM ON THE FLOOR IN FRONT OF RIGHT FOOT, LOOK TOWARD UPPER PALM. HOLD. REPEAT VARIATIONS ON BOTH SIDES & HOLD FOR AROUND 30 SECONDS EACH.  
 EXCELLENT POSE FOR DEVELOPING BALANCE.

**TREE POSTURE**  
 DO BOTH SIDES.  
 STANDING ON ONE LEG REST THE OTHER FOOT EITHER ON THE ANKLE WITH TOE ON THE FLOOR - THE CALF MUSCLE OR AS FAR UP INTO THE TOP OF THE INNER LEG, AS POSSIBLE. PALMS TOGETHER & TAKE A MOMENT TO FIND BALANCE THEN PUSH THE FOOT FIRMLY INTO THE STANDING LEG. WHEN READY RAISE ARMS UP ABOVE THE HEAD - STRETCH STRONGLY UP THROUGH THE TORSO. RELAX THE SHOULDERS. HOLD FOR 30 SECONDS & FOR EXTRA CHALLENGE TRY TO CLOSE EYES. STRENGTHENS ANKLES, CALVES & THIGHS. IMPROVES FLEXIBILITY & BALANCE.



## 4. BALANCE & STRETCH



THESE 5 BALANCE/STRETCHES CAN BE EXECUTED IN SEQUENCE. INTERLOCK FINGERS & PUSH OUT PALMS WHILE BENDING FORWARD AT HIPS WITH BACK FLAT & ARMS IN LINE - HOLD. ENGAGE QUADS. BENDING AT THE HIPS, DROP PALMS DOWN TOWARD FLOOR FOR STANDING FORWARDS FOLD - HANG & HOLD. FOR EXTRA CHALLENGE TAKE WEIGHT FORWARD TO BALLS OF FEET. PRESSING PALMS TO FLOOR CROUCH DOWN & RAISE UP HIGH ON TOES - HOLD. STRONGLY PUSH ARMS TO FRONT, BALANCE & SIT BACK ONTO HEELS - HOLD. RETURN PALMS TO FLOOR BESIDE KNEES, ROLL TOES FORWARD ONTO INSTEPS - PUSH UP THROUGH ARMS RAISING KNEES UP & STRETCH INSTEPS - HOLD. STRETCHES HANDS, ARMS, TORSO, LEGS, ANKLES & FEET.



INNER FOREARM STRETCH  
ON KNEES PRESS PALMS TO THE FLOOR WITH FINGERTIPS POINTING TOWARDS THE KNEES & INNER FOREARMS TO THE FRONT. TUCK TOES UNDER & SLOWLY LEAN BACKWARDS TOWARDS THE HEELS WHILST KEEPING PALMS FLAT ON FLOOR. HOLD. STRETCHES WRISTS, HANDS, FINGERS, FOREARMS, TRICEPS & BICEPS, SHINS, ANKLES, INSTEP, TOES.



### EAGLE ARMS IN HALF LOTUS POSITION

WRAP LEFT ELBOW UNDER RIGHT ELBOW - TRY TO GRASP THE INSIDE OF THE RIGHT PALM OR WRIST WITH LEFT HAND OR FINGERTIPS. HOLD FOR A MOMENT THEN LIFT ELBOWS SLIGHTLY REACHING FINGERS TO CEILING. KEEPING SPINE STRAIGHT HOLD 30 SECONDS.

STRETCH ON BOTH SIDES. STRETCHES THE SHOULDERS, UPPER ARMS & BACK, HIPS, ANKLES & KNEES.

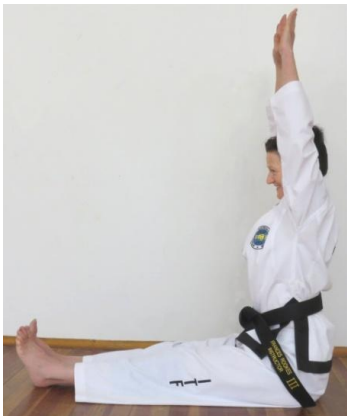


## 5. STRETCH & COUNTER STRETCH



**THE HURDLER (LEFT)** A GOOD PREPARATION FOR SITTING FORWARDS BEND. SIT WITH RIGHT LEGS EXTENDED & FOOT FLEXED UPWARDS - TUCK LEFT LEG HIGH INTO INNER THIGH - REACH ARMS UPWARD STRAIGHTEN SPINE - INHALE TURN BODY RIGHT - EXHALE & BEND AT HIPS TO EXTEND BODY OVER RIGHT LEG RESTING ARMS ON THE FLOOR. HOLD. CURL SPINE BACK TO SITTING. REPEAT ON OPPOSITE SIDE.

**SITTING FORWARDS BEND (BELOW)** ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING STRETCHES BECAUSE IT ASKS THE WHOLE POSTERIOR SIDE OF THE BODY TO STRETCH. SIT BONES SQUARE ON THE FLOOR, LEGS OUT IN FRONT, REACHING UP WITH STRAIGHT SPINE (BELOW LEFT) IDEALLY LEGS ARE STRAIGHT WITH QUAD MUSCLES ENGAGED TO PROTECT KNEES & TOES ARE POINTED UPWARDS. BEND FORWARDS AT THE HIPS WITHOUT TOO MUCH TENSION & WITH BACK AS FLAT AS POSSIBLE. FIND THE NATURAL FOLD FOR THE BODY. ALLOW TIME TO SINK INTO IT SLOWLY. HOLD.



**CALISTHENICS (DOSOO DALLYON)** ARE VERY GOOD AND SHOULD BE PRACTISED BY ALL TAEKWON-DO STUDENTS. THEY ARE FAR MORE BENEFICIAL THAN WEIGHT LIFTING, ARE EXCELLENT FOR STRENGTHENING MUSCLES AND BODY TONE AND CAN BE SAFELY PRACTICED BY ALL AGE GROUPS. (p.406 Taekwon-do the Korean Art of Self Defence' by General Choi Hong Hi)



**INCLINE PLANE OR REVERSE PLANK (ABOVE).** COUNTER POSTURE FOR SITTING FORWARDS BEND.

WITH ARMS BEHIND HIPS & FINGERS POINTED EITHER TOWARDS OR AWAY FROM BODY, BEGIN TO LEAN BACK INTO PALMS. INHALE & PRESS INTO PALMS TO LIFT THE HIPS UP. AS THE HIPS LIFT, ENGAGE THE LEGS BY PULLING UP THE KNEES & SQUEEZING THE THIGHS. TRY TO PRESS THE BOTTOMS OF THE FEET FLAT TOWARD THE FLOOR THEN GENTLY SQUEEZE THE BUTTOCKS & DRAW THE SHOULDER BLADES TOGETHER TO LIFT UP THROUGH THE STERNUM. ALIGN THE BODY FROM TOES TO THE SHOULDERS. IF IT FEELS COMFORTABLE, CAREFULLY DROP THE HEAD BACK. HOLD.



**BACKBENDS - SPHINX (ABOVE LEFT) & COBRA (ABOVE RIGHT).** 30 SECONDS EACH.

**SPHINX** - BETTER FOR BEGINNERS AS THE BEND IS NOT SO INTENSE INTO THE SPINE. PLACE ELBOWS UNDER SHOULDERS PALMS FLAT. LEGS CAN BE APART. PUSH UP TO A COMFORTABLE BACK BEND KEEPING INNER FOREARMS ON FLOOR - LOOK UP. HOLD.

**COBRA** - THIS IS A BACK BEND & ARM STRENGTHENING POSE. FACING DOWNWARDS - FEET TOGETHER - PLACE FINGERTIPS LEVEL WITH SHOULDERS - TUCK ELBOWS RIGHT IN TOWARD RIBCAGE, PUSH INTO HANDS & COME UP AS FAR AS THE STRETCH WILL ALLOW COMFORTABLY. LOOK UP IF NECK COMFORT WILL ALLOW & RELAX SHOULDERS DOWN. ENGAGE QUADS & PUSH TOPS OF FEET & HIPS INTO FLOOR. HOLD. EXHALE DEEPLY WHEN DROPPING DEEPER INTO BEND. LOWER DOWN SLOWLY TO FLOOR THEN COUNTER STRETCH AS FOLLOWS ON THE NEXT PAGE.

## 6. STRETCH & COUNTER STRETCH



HUGGING KNEES WITH A STRAIGHT SPINE OR - THE CHILDS POSE - SITTING BACK AS FAR BACK ON HEELS AS POSSIBLE - KNEES CAN BE TOGETHER OR APART WITH ARMS IN FRONT, ALONGSIDE THE BODY, OR RESTING ON THE SACRUM. THESE ARE VERY COMFORTABLE POSITIONS & GOOD COUNTER STRETCHES TO REALIGN THE BODY AFTER DEEP STRETCHES. GENTLY RELEASES & STRETCHES OUT THE SHOULDERS, LOWER BACK, HIPS, THIGHS, KNEES & ANKLES.



LYING HAMSTRING STRETCH  
FROM LYING POSITION RAISE RIGHT LEG UP AS FAR AS IT WILL GO. KEEP LEFT LEG FLAT ON FLOOR. SMALL OF THE BACK PUSHED DOWNWARDS. REACH UP ON THE EXHALE & GRASP THE LEG WITH HANDS BEHIND THE THIGH. WHEN READY TAKE THE HANDS FURTHER UP THE LEG & RAISE THE HEAD TOWARD KNEE. THERE SHOULD BE NO TENSION IN THE JAW & CHIN CAN REST TOWARD NECK. REPEAT ON LEFT.



LYING HIP & GLUTE STRETCH  
FROM LYING POSITION & WITH ARMS OUTSTRETCHED EITHER SIDE OF BODY, RAISE THE RIGHT LEG UP VERTICAL & AS STRAIGHT POSSIBLE. KEEPING LEFT LEG FLAT ON FLOOR WITH MUSCLES ENGAGED & RIGHT LEG STRAIGHT DROP THE FOOT TO THE LEFT SIDE. TURN HEAD TO LOOK AT RIGHT HAND. HOLD. REPEAT ON THE LEFT SIDE. STRETCHES HIPS, GLUTES, UPPER & LOWER BACK. REPEAT BOTH SIDES.



PRONE SHOULDER STRETCH  
LYING FACE DOWN ON FLOOR PLACE RIGHT ARM OUT TO THE SIDE - WITH LEFT PALM PUSHING INTO THE FLOOR ON OPPOSITE SIDE - IF THIS IS INTENSE ENOUGH HOLD HERE - TO FURTHER INTENSIFY PUSH TORSO UP & ROLL ONTO SIDE WITH FEET STACKED ONE ABOVE THE OTHER - IF THAT IS MAXIMUM, HOLD - IF NOT BEND UPPER KNEE & PLACE FOOT ON FLOOR BEHIND OTHER KNEE - FOR FURTHER STRETCH TAKE THE HAND BEHIND THE BACK. HOLD IF COMFORTABLE FOR AROUND 30 SECONDS. REPEAT ON OPPOSITE SIDE. STRETCHES & STRENGTHENS SHOULDERS, ARMS, TORSO & HIPS.



## 7. STRETCH & COUNTER STRETCH

RIGHT - IS AN ALTERNATIVE & POSSIBLY FOR SOME A MORE CHALLENGING SHOULDER STRETCH. THIS INCORPORATES A STRETCH TO TRICEP/BICEP AREA. CAN BE PERFORMED STANDING OR KNEELING. REACH ARMS IN BEHIND THE BACK & TRY TO PLACE PALMS TOGETHER. PUSH HEELS OF HANDS TOWARDS EACH OTHER THEN PUSH FINGERTIPS UPWARDS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE & ONLY TO TENSION.

FAR RIGHT - FOLLOWING PREVIOUS SHOULDER STRETCHES, A FRONTAL BICEP & TRICEP STRETCH WILL COUNTER ANY TENSION THAT MAY HAVE BUILT UP WHILST STRETCHING THE AREA. CAN ALSO BE EXECUTED STANDING.



PEDALLING THE FEET IN DOWNWARD DOG OR INVERTED 'V' (RIGHT) IS A GOOD WAY TO STRETCH OUT & RELEASE TENSION THE BODY MAY HAVE ACCUMULATED.

FOLLOWING THIS BOTH FEET CAN BE RAISED UP ON TOES THEN LOWERED WITH HEELS TOWARD THE FLOOR FOR A DEEPER STRETCH INTO THE HAMSTRINGS. RAISE UP TAILBONE & PUSH INTO THE ARMS & SHOULDERS WHILST SINKING CHEST TOWARD THE FLOOR. STRETCHES BACKS OF LEGS, BACK, SHOULDERS, ARMS & WRISTS. THIS IS A GOOD POSITION TO LOWER ONTO KNEES FOR PIGEON.



ONE LEGGED PIGEON (LEFT)  
BEGIN ON HANDS & KNEES - BRING LEFT KNEE FORWARD & PLACE IT CLOSE TO THE LEFT HAND - KEEPING IT IN LINE WITH THE HIP, EXTEND THE RIGHT LEG BACK LOWERING HIPS TO THE FLOOR - KEEP THE TOP OF THE REAR FOOT FLEXED & PUSHING DOWNWARDS TO PROTECT KNEE - THE FURTHER FORWARD THE FRONT FOOT IS TO THE WRIST, THE GREATER THE STRETCH. BE MINDFUL OF THE KNEE JOINTS & WORK TO TENSION ONLY. PRESS HANDS INTO FLOOR TO RAISE UP & MAKE A SMALL BACKBEND. ROLL SHOULDERS BACK & PUSH CHEST FORWARD. HOLD - BREATHE DEEPLY.

FOLLOWING THIS IF FLEXIBILITY WILL ALLOW DEEPER STRETCHING, MOVE INTO THE FORWARD FOLD PIGEON (LOWER LEFT) BREATHE IN DEEPLY & ON THE EXHALE SLOWLY WALK HANDS OUT IN FRONT LETTING THE BODY DROP GRADUALLY DOWN OVER THE LEFT KNEE - KEEP THE RIGHT HIP AS CLOSE TO THE FLOOR AS POSSIBLE - SOME WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE THE CHEST RIGHT DOWN & FOR OTHERS EITHER ELBOWS OR REMAINING ON HANDS WILL BE ENOUGH. HOLD 30 SECONDS OR MORE. THIS OFFERS A DEEP STRETCH FOR HIPS, THIGHS, GROINS & BUTTOCKS. REPEAT ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE.





## 8. DEEPER STRETCHES



**SHOE LACE (LEFT & MIDDLE)** - OFFERS A GREATER HIP OPENING CHALLENGE - SIT WITH HIPS ON THE LEFT SIDE OF FEET - PLACE RIGHT LEG OVER LEFT WITH KNEES STACKED ONE ABOVE THE OTHER. DISTRIBUTE WEIGHT EVENLY BETWEEN THE SIT BONES - ON THE EXHALE TRY TO TAKE HANDS FORWARD & REACH CHEST OUT OVER THE KNEES. HOLD FOR AS LONG AS COMFORT WILL ALLOW. REPEAT BOTH SIDES. DEEP STRETCHES HIPS & KNEES WHILST ALSO WORKING BACK, SHOULDERS, GLUTES, THIGHS & ANKLES.

**ROCK THE BABY (FAR RIGHT)** - AN ALTERNATIVE HIP & THIGH STRETCH - WITH SIT BONES GROUNDED & LEFT LEG OUT STRAIGHT OR TUCKED UP IN TO RIGHT BUTTOCK (AS PICTURED) - PLACE SOLE OF RIGHT FOOT INTO THE CROOK OF LEFT ELBOW - EITHER GRASP KNEE & ANKLE WITH HANDS OR IF ABLE TO REACH FURTHER, CLASP HANDS TOGETHER & GENTLY ROCK LEG FROM LEFT TO RIGHT SEVERAL TIMES. THIS IS GREAT FOR IMPROVING FLEXIBILITY IN THE HIP AREA. REPEAT ON LEFT SIDE.



**HALF SPINAL TWIST**  
WITH LEGS OUTSTRETCHED BRING LEFT FOOT TO OUTSIDE OF THE RIGHT KNEE. WITH BOTH SIT BONES GROUNDED, PLACE LEFT PALM ON FLOOR BEHIND THE HIPS. PLACE RIGHT ELBOW OUTSIDE OF LEFT KNEE OR OUTSTRETCHED ARM HOLDING ANKLE - DRAW LEFT SHOULDER BACK & TURN HEAD TO TWIST ENTIRE SPINE. LIFT SPINE ON INHALE - GENTLY TWIST FURTHER ON EXHALE. FOR MORE CHALLENGE (AS RIGHT) TUCK RIGHT LEG UP TOWARD LEFT HIP. DO BOTH SIDES. STRETCHES & STRENGTHENS SPINE.



**SINGLE LEG SEATED WIDE ANGLE STRETCH (ABOVE LEFT)** - REPEAT BOTH SIDES SITTING FIRMLY ON SIT BONES TUCK LEFT LEG IN - GRASP SOLE OF RIGHT FOOT & STRAIGHTEN UP & OUT TO THE RIGHT SIDE. ENGAGE QUADS & KNEE CAPS.

**DOUBLE LEG SEATED WIDE ANGLE STRETCH (ABOVE RIGHT)** - SEATED WITH FEET DRAWN IN & SOLES CLOSE TOGETHER - GRASP THE INSIDES OF FEET OR TOES WITH HANDS, ENGAGE THE CORE & SLOWLY BEGIN TO PUSH FEET UP & SPREAD WIDE - TENSE QUADS TO PROTECT KNEES - TAKE TIME TO STABILISE BALANCE THEN LIFT CHEST & STRAIGHTEN THE SPINE - RELAX SHOULDERS. HOLD 30 SECONDS THEN DRAW FEET BACK INTO SITTING WITH HEELS TOGETHER. STRETCHES HIPS, HAMSTRINGS & CALVES, STRENGTHENS ARMS, CORE & CHEST. THIS CAN BE DONE WITH KNEES BENT RATHER THAN ROUNDING SPINE.

**THE HAPPY BABY (LEFT)** PLACE HANDS ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE FLEXED FEET - BEND THE KNEES - USE GENTLE PRESSURE TO FEET, PRESSING KNEES DOWNWARDS TOWARD FLOOR EITHER SIDE OF THE CHEST. STRETCHES HIPS, GROIN & LOWER BACK - STRENGTHENS ARMS & CHEST.

## 9. EXTENDED DEEP STRETCHES



**SEATED SIDE BEND**  
SITTING WITH LEGS EXTENDED IN AS WIDE A 'V' AS POSSIBLE & FEET FLEXED UPWARDS, TOES BACK. REACH ARMS UPWARD & STRAIGHTEN SPINE. INHALE - FOLD BODY RIGHT WITH CHEST FACING FRONTAL. BEND AT HIPS TO EXTEND BODY OVER RIGHT LEG. REPEAT ON LEFT.



### SEATED WIDE ANGLE FORWARD FOLD

SIT WITH LEGS EXTENDED IN AS WIDE A 'V' AS POSSIBLE. WITH FEET FLEXED UPWARDS & TOES PULLED BACK, REACH ARMS STRONGLY UPWARD & STRAIGHTEN SPINE - INHALE DEEPLY, THEN ON THE EXHALE BEND FORWARDS MAINTAINING SPINAL ALIGNMENT - FOCUS ON RELAXING THE HIP JOINTS & FOLDING OVER WITHOUT THE BACK CURVING. TAKE TIME HERE TO ALLOW THE BODY TO FIND ITS NATURAL POSITION & ADJUST. WHEN THE BODY FEELS READY TO SINK FURTHER INTO THIS - INHALE DEEPLY, FOCUS ON PUSHING THE SMALL OF THE BACK FORWARD & ROLLING THE INNER THIGHS TOWARD THE FLOOR - EXHALE DEEPLY RELAXING DOWN. WHILE DOING THIS PLACE HANDS ON THE FLOOR & WALK FINGERS OUT IN FRONT AS FAR AS POSSIBLE. BE MINDFUL OF STRETCHING ONLY TO PAINLESS TENSION. THIS IS A CHALLENGING STRETCH & REQUIRES PATIENCE TO SEE PROGRESS. KEEP IN MIND THAT JOINT STRUCTURE AROUND HIPS CAN VARY GREATLY. STRETCHES THE WHOLE HIP AREA, INNER THIGHS, BACK & HAMSTRINGS.



**SEATED BUTTERFLY** (SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS COBBLER)  
SITTING WITH LEGS IN FRONT, BRING SOLES OF FEET TOGETHER. HOLDING ACROSS THE TOPS OF THE TOES, PULL FEET IN AS CLOSE TO PELVIC AREA AS IS COMFORTABLE - SIDES OF FEET ON THE FLOOR. LENGTHEN UP THROUGH CHEST, SPINE & CROWN OF HEAD, WHILE TUCKING CHIN TOWARD NECK - INHALE & LIFT UP KNEES - ON THE EXHALE RELAX THEM OUT TOWARD THE FLOOR. ELBOWS CAN BE USED TO GENTLY PUSH ON INNER THIGHS TO ENCOURAGE THE KNEES TO SINK FURTHER. FOR ADDED CHALLENGE PLACE THUMBS ON THE BALLS OF FEET & OPEN THEM OUTWARDS (SHOWN LEFT) AS IF OPENING A BOOK. THIS WILL ENCOURAGE THE HIPS TO OPEN FURTHER & ALLOW KNEES TO COME CLOSER TO FLOOR. HOLDING ALIGNMENT LEAN FORWARD. STRETCHES LOWER BACK, QUADS, HIPS & GROIN AREA.



## 10. EXTENDED DEEP STRETCHES & COMPLETION



**WIDE SQUAT** (SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS SUMO SQUAT) - STEP FEET WIDER THAN HIP WIDTH APART - BEND KNEES TO BRING HIPS DOWN TOWARD HEELS. TAKE THIGHS WIDER THAN TORSO & LEAN FORWARD SO THE TORSO FITS BETWEEN THIGHS - PALMS TOGETHER IN FRONT OF CHEST - PRESS ELBOWS TO INSIDE OF EACH KNEE TO DEEPEN THE HIP STRETCH - SINK HIPS & LENGTHEN THE SPINE - RELAX SHOULDERS - HOLD 15 SECONDS OR MORE. PRESS STRONGLY THROUGH BOTH FEET TO COME UP.

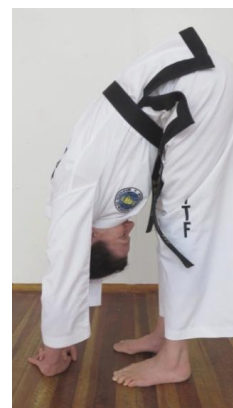
**SINGLE LEG SQUAT** - FEET COMFORTABLY APART - HINGE FROM HIPS & BRING FINGER TIPS TO THE FLOOR - BEND RIGHT KNEE & LOWER HIPS TOWARD OPPOSITE FOOT. BRING TORSO AS UPRIGHT AS POSSIBLE - EITHER HUG ELBOWS OR PUSH PALMS TOGETHER. ACTIVATE QUADS OF THE EXTENDED LEG & PUSH THE CALF MUSCLE DOWN TOWARD FLOOR - RELAX SHOULDERS. HOLD 15 SECONDS OR MORE IF COMFORTABLE TO DO SO. SLOWLY STRAIGHTEN BOTH LEGS TO CAREFULLY COME UP. REPEAT ON THE LEFT SIDE.

DEEP STRETCHES HIPS & GROIN MUSCLES (HAMSTRINGS FOR SINGLE LEG SQUAT).  
STRENGTHENS SHOULDERS, BACK, CORE, THIGHS, ANKLES.

TO COUNTER STRETCH & RELEASE ANY TENSION - HUG KNEES INTO TORSO WITH BACK STRAIGHT (AS BELOW FAR LEFT).  
NOTE: THESE VERY INTENSE STRETCHES SHOULD BE APPROACHED CAUTIOUSLY & AVOIDED IF THERE ARE ANY KNEE PROBLEMS.



**BROKEN TOE** (LEFT) SIT ON HEELS WITH TOES TUCKED UNDER - HOLD 15-30 SECONDS. BRING KNEES UP, ROLL BACK UP ONTO TOES & COMPLETE THE WARM DOWN BY REPEATING THE INITIAL STRETCHES AS BELOW (LEFT TO RIGHT). INTERLOCK FINGERS & PUSH PALMS FORWARDS STRETCHING ARMS & BALANCING - PLACE PALMS, FINGERS STILL INTERLOCKED, ON FLOOR & PUSH UP INTO A LOOSE STANDING FORWARDS FOLD, KNEES MAY BE SLIGHTLY BENT, HANG THERE. SLOWLY CURL UP & STRETCH TALL.





## 11. REFLECTION



FOLLOWING A TRAINING SESSION IT CAN BE VERY BENEFICIAL TO TAKE A FEW MINUTES OF REFLECTION - SITTING COMFORTABLY CROSS LEGGED OR LYING DOWN ON THE BACK WITH FEET APART & ARMS ON THE FLOOR OUT FROM THE BODY - PALMS FACING UPWARDS - EYES OPEN OR CLOSED. THIS GIVES THE OPPORTUNITY TO CHECK IN WITH & REALIGN THE BODY, WHILE REFLECTING ON & ASSIMILATING OUR PRACTISE, BEFORE RETURNING TO LIFE OUTSIDE THE DOJANG.



THIS IS A GUIDE BASED ON MY OWN EXPERIENCE & IN GOOD FAITH I HAVE ENDEAVOURED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION AS ACCURATE & WELL RESEARCHED AS POSSIBLE. I WOULD LIKE TO OFFER A VERY SPECIAL THANKYOU TO MELANIE MASON, FOR HER BRILLIANT PHOTOGRAPHY SKILLS & ASSISTANCE WITH PROOF READING.

**TAEKWON - FRANCES ROOKES III DAN**