



# Mackenzie Lee's Guide to Advanced Mobility and Yoga for Runners

## Purpose

After running, it's a good idea to spend time doing some stretching and mobility for better recovery and performance.

There are a lot of good routines out there, but this one highlights my go-to stretches targeted for running. Our bodies are all unique so tweaking, removing, or adding your own preferences is great. I mention what I think are the core movements and what can be substituted or modified for your own preferences.

## Core Routine (standing to lying down)

1. [Crescent Lunge](#) (15-30 sec each side)
  - a. **Area Targeted:** Hips
  - b. You don't have to raise your arms. Hands on hips is common.
  - c. Make sure you engage your glutes and tuck your tailbone to get maximum benefit.
2. [Cossack Squat](#) (5-10 reps per side)
  - a. **Area Targeted:** Adductor + groin



## Core Routine (continued)

3. [Forward Fold](#) (hold 10-30 sec)
  - a. **Area Targeted:** Hamstrings
  - b. [Bend your knees](#) if straight legs hurts the back. You want to avoid rounding your back as much as possible. See [this article](#) for proper alignment
  - c. Can let arms droop down or if you are flexible enough you can rest your hands on the ground. I like to [cross my arms](#) and let gravity pull me deeper into the stretch
  - d. [Standing Single Leg Hamstring Stretch](#) (15-30 sec each side)
    - i. I recommend this instead if you have really tight hamstrings
  
4. [Crooked Monkey](#) (15-30 sec each side)
  - a. **Area Targeted:** Intense on the quads
  - b. Lots of names for this one.
  - c. If this is too intense, then you can do the standing quad stretch but I've found that to be pretty useless in terms of improving raw quad flexibility so recommend working up to this.
  - d. Engage your glute.
  
5. [Half Front Splits](#) (15-30 sec each side)
  - a. **Area Targeted:** Hamstrings
  - b. Bend your knee if straight leg is too intense.
  - c. Excellent for PNF stretching (see [notes](#) for PNF). Press your extended heel into the ground on inhales and relax deeper into the movement on exhales. Repeat 2-3 times.
  
6. [Pigeon Pose](#) (15-30 sec each side)
  - a. **Area Targeted:** Psoas + hips
  - b. PNF stretch. Press and contract your front knee into the ground on inhales and relax deeper into the movement on exhales.
  
7. [Single Leg Seated Forward Fold](#) (15-30 sec each side)
  - a. **Area Targeted:** Calves + hamstrings
  - b. Bend your knee if this is too intense.



## Core Routine (continued)

8. [Frog Stretch](#) (Hold for 15-30 seconds, can hold for longer)
  - a. **Area Targeted:** Adductors + hips
  - b. This one is very intense, go slow.
  - c. Can also rock back and forth instead of a static hold.
  
9. [Figure Four Stretch](#) (15 - 30 sec each side)
  - a. **Area Targeted:** Hips
  - b. Can be done lying down or standing and squatting down.

## Bonus Points

10. [ATG Split Squat](#) (15-30 sec each side)
  - a. **Area Targeted:** Quads + glutes + hips
  - b. This will likely be pretty hard and uncomfortable so take it easy.
  - c. Can be done as a static stretch or rocking back and forth.
  - d. You don't need to use weights.
11. [Happy Baby Pose](#) (15-30 sec)
  - a. **Area Targeted:** Hips + Low back
  - b. This one just always feels good especially if you're sore/fatigued.
12. [Pancake Stretch/Straddle Stretch](#) (20-30 sec)
  - a. **Area Targeted:** Hamstrings + Adductors
  - b. I bend my knees since this is very hard for me.
13. [Deep Squat](#) (15-30 sec)
  - a. Spine + Hips
  - b. This one is a core movement that I think everyone should work up to but I didn't include it since I think people should just be doing this all the time.
14. [Butterfly Stretch](#) (20-30 sec)
  - a. **Area Targeted:** Groin + Adductors
15. [Neck + Shoulder stretches](#)
  - a. Ear to shoulder neck rolls and arm across chest if you only had to do 1 for each.



## Notes

- All stretches and movements should be done according to where you are in your flexibility and mobility journey.
- Bending your knees or modifying movements to make them less intense is highly recommended as long as you feel the stretch.
  - Every movement has a progression and can be modified.
- These movements are for recovery not further injury.
  - If anything hurts, then stop immediately.
  - Stretching can be uncomfortable and even painful but the discomfort should be in the muscles.
  - It is always okay to do a less intense variation.
- Taking cues from yoga for all these movements will be helpful since it is just properly aligning your body for the movement.
- [PNF](#) stretching is great for increasing range of motion and I recommend it for movements where contraction is appropriate like pigeon pose or half front splits.
  - Essentially, contract and press down on the target muscle during inhales then relax deeper into the stretch on exhales.

## Further Resources

- <https://www.daniwinksflexibility.com/flexopedia>
  - A newer website I've stumbled across that is still a work-in-progress but I like the breadth and depth of the site already.
  - The flexopedia section is still in construction but fortunately for runners basically all the leg muscles except calves have completed sections.
  - This has a heavy yoga focus and has great sections on different exercises for strengthening or flexibility.
  - Excellent for understanding some anatomy of flexibility.
  - Straps + blocks are common yoga tools for progressions. Consider adding them to your home recovery kit.
- [Joe DeFranco's Limber 11](#) - video
  - [Written out routine](#)
  - Originally designed as a lower body warm up, this routine is a great way to hit and engage the lower body.
  - Good routine if you want to include rolling and massage balls.



## About Mackenzie



I first studied yoga at the University of Rochester in Central New York and have continued to expand my knowledge base through my own practice for over 5 years now. Not only do I believe in the practice, but I love to share what I've learned with others.

I've run a number of half marathons and one marathon, finishing in under 4 hours. Over the years I've explored a huge variety of fitness practices, from Crossfit to MMA, but yoga has always been my constant.