

Personal Flexibility Assessment

As you've already learned from the previous chapters, it is not in any athlete's best interest to engage in a stretching program without first evaluating what needs to be stretched. Without an assessment, at best, you may get lucky and experience improved athletic performance from increased flexibility. At worst, you may stretch a part of your body that is already hypermobile and irritate the area by making it too flexible. You can avoid this gamble by creating your personal flexibility assessment (PFA). In doing so, you will learn how to take your personal history, perform a postural evaluation, identify trigger points and create a body map of them, test your range of motion, and test your functional movement patterns. This process will help you clarify any doubts or questions you have about your flexibility, such as why you seem to get tight or sore in the same places. The PFA has been instrumental in helping our clients better understand the causes and effects of their flexibility limitations. This assessment also serves as a personal training record that you can use to reevaluate your progress from time to time.

We've designed the PFA for the healthy, currently uninjured athlete. If you fall outside this category, then we recommend that you seek appropriate guidance from a health professional so that you can get a safe and accurate Stretch to Win evaluation and plan for treatment. Once your injury has been stabilized and treated and you are medically cleared, using the PFA on your own is appropriate and will help prevent problems in the future. While we typically conduct a flexibility specialist assessment for our clients in our facility, for the purpose of this book we have modified it and created the PFA for use by individuals.

The PFA is a fundamental element of the Stretch to Win system of individualized flexibility training. Once your assessment is complete, in the following chapters you can learn key stretches and how to build a stretching routine, how to connect the key stretches to the fascial line, and how to reassess and adjust your program for your sport-specific needs and as your flexibility changes. In this chapter we focus on mastering the PFA.

Before you begin your self-assessment, make several photocopies of the PFA form at the end of this chapter, pages 76 to 80, or download a copy from our website at www.stretchtowin.com. Use your copies of the self-assessment to write down your findings and answers to the questions. In the future, you can use these as a reference for checking your progress weekly, monthly, or at whatever frequency works with your schedule and goals, and for modifying your program as needed.

In chapter 5 (pages 84 to 94) are two sample completed assessments to help you see how to record the information. Take a moment now to glance over these examples so that when you complete your own assessment, you'll be able to use the symbols and notations that simplify the process.

The PFA has seven steps:

1. Take a brief personal history.
2. Describe any symptoms you are experiencing.
3. Perform a postural evaluation.
4. Test sport-specific movements.
5. Assess your active range of motion (AROM).
6. Identify and map your body's trigger points.
7. Review your findings and look for patterns and correlations.

Personal Flexibility Assessment

Name _____ Date _____

History

See pages 50 to 51.

- A. List any injuries, surgeries, or physical problems you have experienced in the past. If more than one, list them chronologically, starting with the most recent.

- B. List any current health problems, complaints, injuries, or current diagnoses made by a health professional.

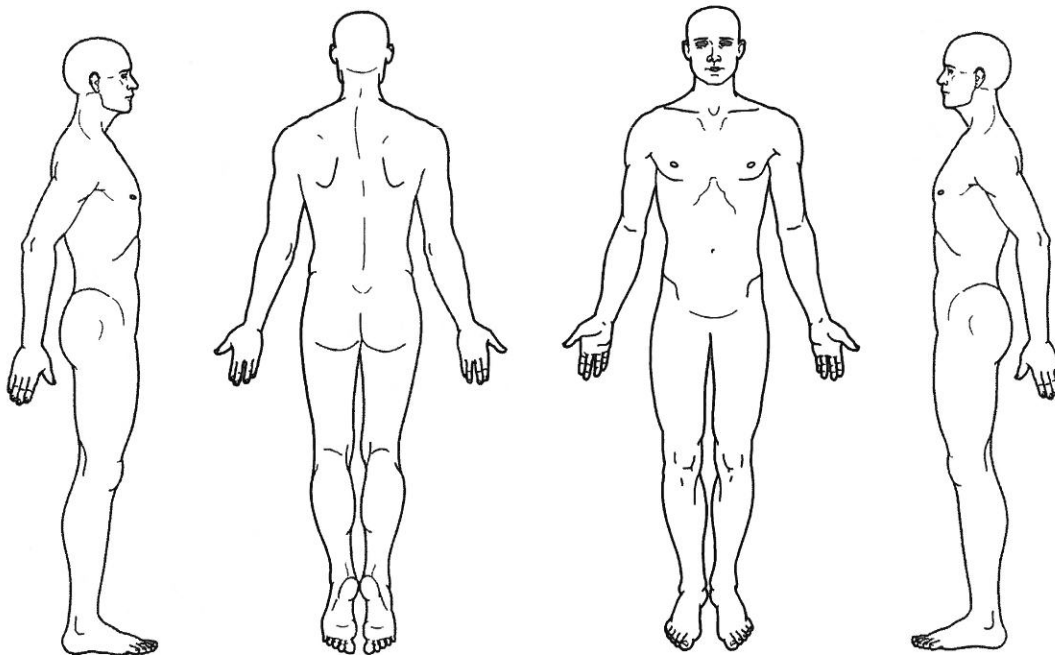
Symptoms

See page 51. Describe what you are feeling in terms of soreness, tightness, pain, or any other discomfort during daily activities or athletic performance.

Posture and Alignment

See pages 52 to 56. List here all areas that you can see that are out of alignment, (e.g., lower shoulder, higher hip, rotated foot).

Mark on the body map diagrams any areas that are out of alignment. Note any obvious bends, tilts, rotations, and shifts.



Sport-Specific Movement

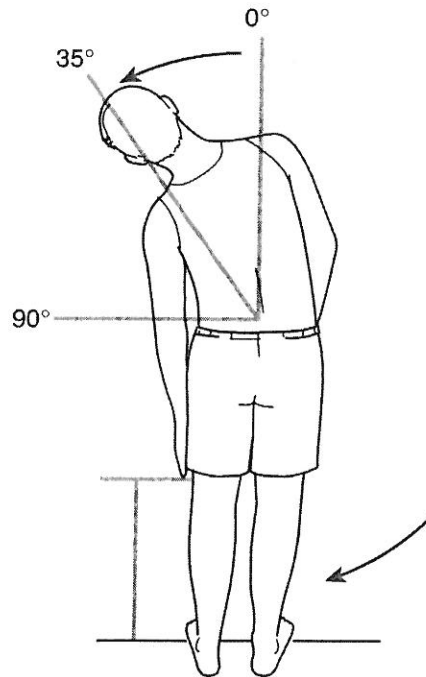
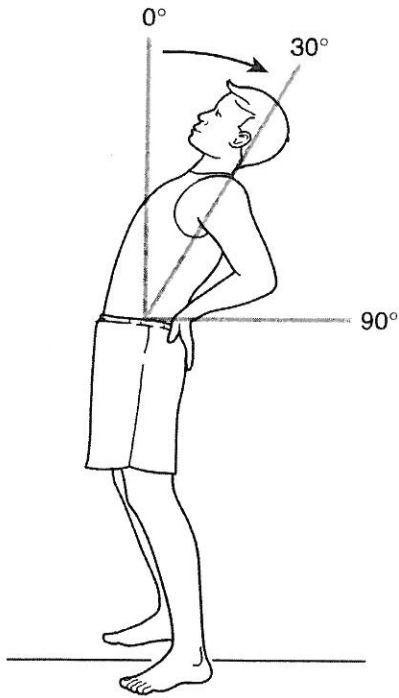
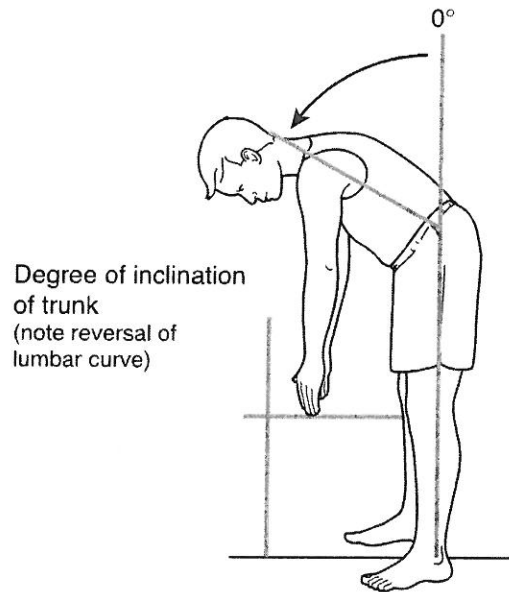
See pages 56 to 57. Select several body positions your sport requires. List them here and then describe how you feel getting into and out of these positions.

Choose a dynamic sport movement for your sport and note below how smooth it feels when you perform this movement.

Active Range of Motion (AROM)

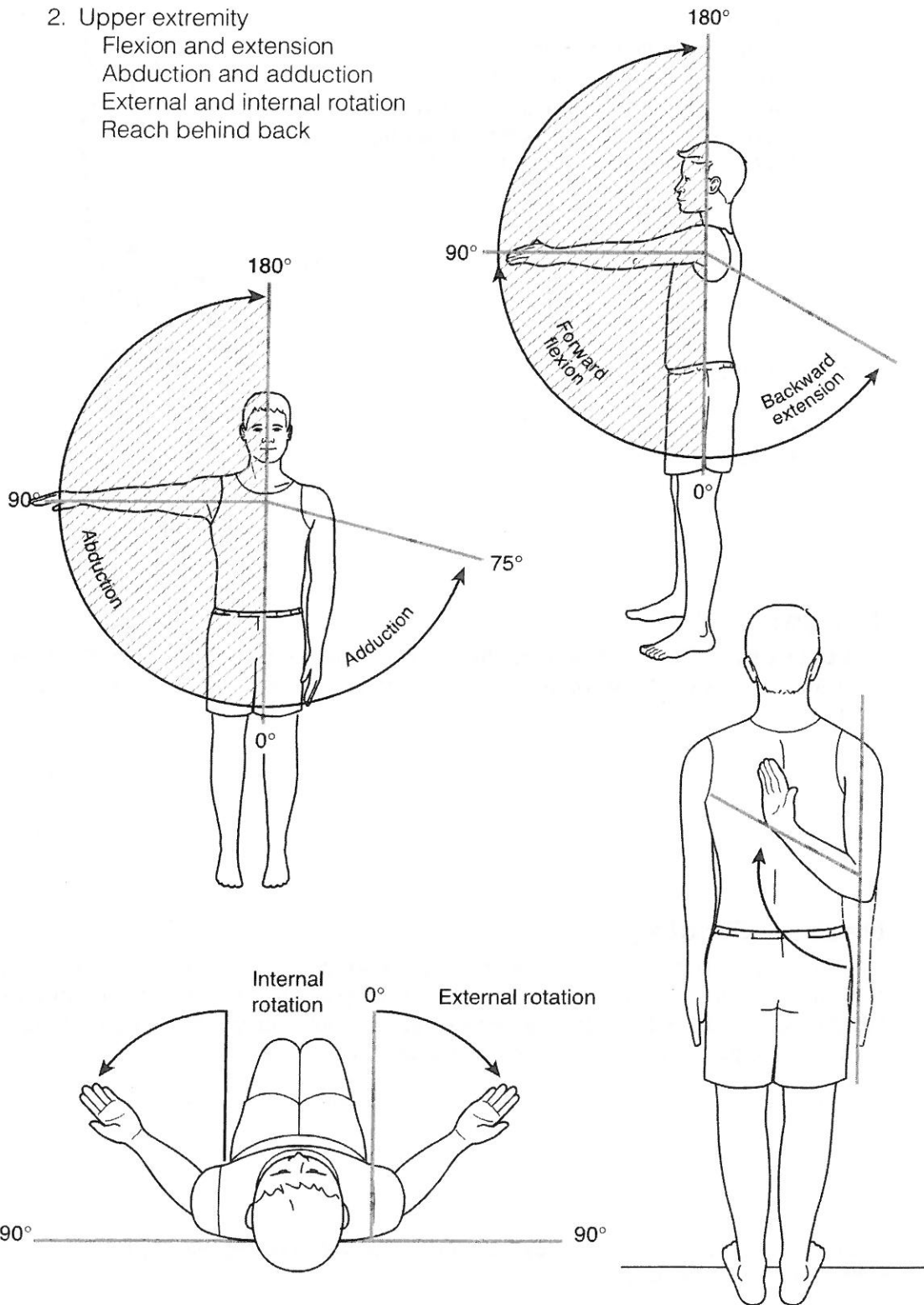
See pages 57 to 67 and perform all of these movements in front of a mirror. Note where restrictions are in your active range of motion for each test:

1. General spine
 - Flexion
 - Extension
 - Side bending
 - Full body rotation



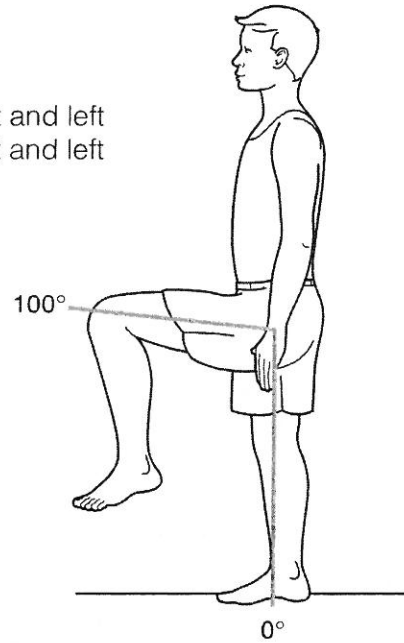
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- 2. Upper extremity
 - Flexion and extension
 - Abduction and adduction
 - External and internal rotation
 - Reach behind back



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3. Lower extremity
 - Standing hip flexion, right and left
 - Standing hip extension, right and left
 - Standing hip abduction, lateral lunge right and left
 - Standing hip adduction, lateral lunge right and left
 - Standing hip rotation, right and left



4. Combination movements
 - Spine
 - Upper extremity
 - Lower extremity

Trigger Points

See pages 67 to 75. List below the trigger points you have found. Mark the body diagrams with an X to show where on the body you have located your trigger points.

Review Findings

Review your findings and note them here. Look for correlations between your past and current histories and any present areas of complaint that may be impacting your athletic performance. For example, are the trigger points that you have found located on or near regions that are bothersome or that do not move well?

Keep this as a record of self-evaluation so that you may repeat it in one week to document your progress.

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