



Stretching for Kickers & Punters

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Most professional kickers and punters will tell you, stretching is essential in your success as a kicking specialist. A flexible kicker or punter is able to maximize his ability by being able to explode up through the ball on every kick. Being flexible also helps prevent nagging injuries that can occur over the course of a season. Most young football specialists do not stretch enough, a common mistake that can hinder a kicker's development. It is vital that you have a regular stretching routine as part of your overall training. I recommend stretching five days a week for at least 15 minutes at a time.

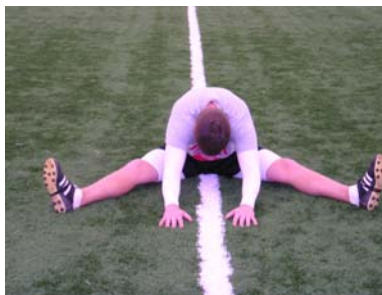
The following stretches aim to provide maximum flexibility in the core power areas for kickers and punters: hamstrings, quadriceps, buttocks, hip flexors, groin, and the lower back. Make sure you have properly warmed up before stretching by breaking a sweat. Do not bounce while stretching. Hold each stretch for 20 seconds.

I. Warm-up:

- A. *One Lap* around a football field or a five-minute stationary bicycle ride
- B. *High-Knee Pumps* (across the field or 15 seconds standing in place)
- C. *Butt-Kicks* (across the field or 15 seconds standing in place)
- D. *High-Knee Skips* (across the field and back or 15 seconds standing in place)

II. Stretches (hold all positions for 20 seconds):

- A. *Leg V* (Hamstrings): Sitting on the ground, spread your legs apart as wide as possible. Keeping your legs straight, lower your chest to one thigh with your head and eyes looking forward. Lower your chest between your legs to stretch both hamstrings.



B. *Modified Hurdler's Stretch* (Hamstrings and Lower Back): Sit with one leg out straight and the other bent in toward the leg you are stretching. Reach out and grab your big toe on your straight leg with your hand.



C. *Butterfly* (Groin and Hip Flexors): **(A)** From a sitting position, place the soles of your feet together. Pull your ankles as close to your groin as possible. Push your knees to the ground by grabbing your ankles with your hands and using your elbows on the inside of your knees pushing down. **(B)** To stretch your hip flexors, push your heels out further away from your body and pull your chest down and out toward your feet by grabbing your ankles.



A.



B.

D. *Pretzels* (Back and Buttocks): Sit on the ground with both legs straight out in front of you. Keeping Flat on the ground, bend your left leg toward your body. Raise your right leg and cross it over the top of your left, placing the bottom of your right foot flat on the ground to the outside of your thigh. Twist your upper body so that you are looking over your shoulder behind yourself using your left arm to push against your right thigh for rotation help. Repeat opposite to stretch other side.



E. *Lying / Seated Knee Grabs* (Glutes and Hip Flexors): **(A)** Lying flat on your back, pull your right knee up toward your chest until you feel the stretch and hold. Repeat opposite to stretch your left leg. **(B & C)** From a seated position, you can also pull your right knee up toward your chest until you feel a stretch. By varying the position of your leg, you will stretch either the glutes or your hip flexors.



A.



B.



C.

F. *Back Roll* (Back): **(A)** Pull your knees to your chest and hold them tight. Rock back and forth on the small lower portion of your lower back. **(B)** To further stretch the lower back and legs, flip your legs back over your head until they touch the ground behind you.



A.



B.

G. *Kneeling Quadricep* (Quadriceps): From a kneeling position, put one leg out in front of you so that your knee forms a 90-degree angle. Lean back slightly to stretch the front quadriceps on the leg that is down.



H. *Standing Quad Stretch* (Quadriceps): Standing on your left leg, grab your right ankle and pull it back as far towards your buttocks as possible and hold. Repeat for your left leg.



I. *Squats* (Groin and Hip Flexors): Keeping your feet flat on the ground and your toes slightly bent outward, squat down. Place your elbows on the inside of your knees and keeping your hands together, push out.



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