

# Athletic

## Journal

MAY, 1985

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MATT BRZYCKI UNIV OF NJ  
RUTGERS-STE INTER COLLEGIATE OF ATHL  
NEW BRUNSWICK NJ 08903



### Teaching Rotational Shot Put Technique

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Flexibility for Wrestling

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Pitching Drills

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The 1-2-1-1 Press

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Photo 1. Neck forward.



Photo 2. Neck back



Photo 3. Neck left.

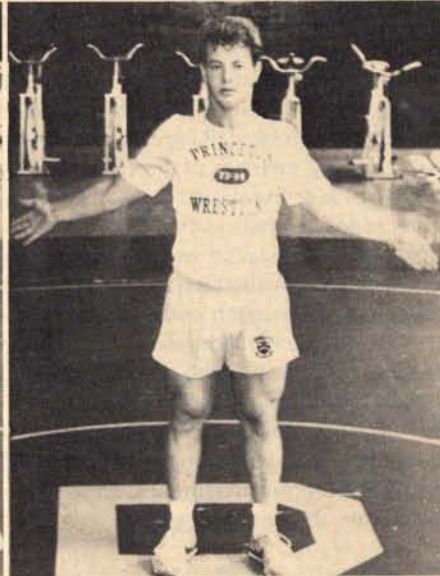


Photo 4. Arm circles forward

# Flexibility Program for Wrestling

**By Matt Brzycki**  
Assistant Strength Coach, Rutgers University

**A**n increase in flexibility will reduce the risk of sustaining an injury during practice sessions and athletic competition. Since the potential for injury is always present in the sport of wrestling, it is extremely important for athletes to be as flexible as possible.

This program is designed to increase wrestlers' joint range of movement. The athletes begin by jogging a few laps around the wrestling room. This will increase circulation and facilitate the warming-up process. The rest of the program consists of stretches for all body parts and takes approximately seven minutes to complete. A summary of the program is given in Table 1 on page 26.

Most of the stretches are performed individually, but I have also included several partner stretches which enable wrestlers to temporarily exceed their normal joint range of movement in a controlled manner. I require athletes to stretch slowly and smoothly, place a mild stretch on the muscle and hold each stretched position for a prescribed amount of time (usually 5 to 10 seconds). Bouncing or bobbing movements are contraindicated, since they magnify the danger

of incurring tissue damage from overstretching without control.

## The Program

The following is a brief description of each exercise in this individual flexibility program:

1. *Neck forward*—interlock your fingers behind your head and pull your chin to your chest (Photo 1).

2. *Neck back*—place your hands underneath your chin and push your head back (Photo 2).

3. *Neck left*—place your left hand on the right side of your head and pull it to the left (Photo 3).

4. *Neck right*—place your right hand on the left side of your head and pull it to the right.

5. *Look left*—look to the left as far as possible without rotating your torso.

6. *Look right*—look to the right as far as possible without rotating your torso.

7. *Arm circles forward*—rotate your arms to the front slowly, then gradually increase the speed (Photo 4).

8. *Arm circles reverse*—rotate your arms

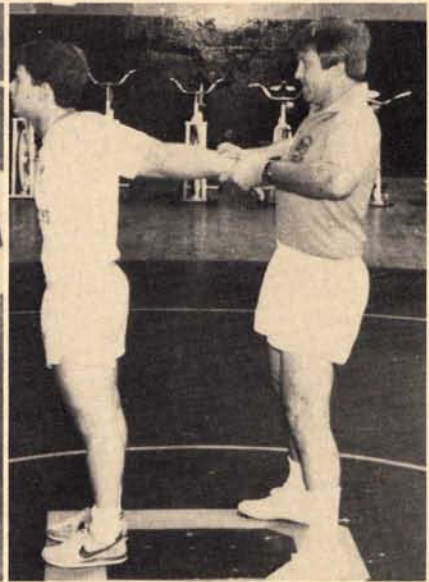


Photo 5. Scratch back-left arm. Photo 6. Grab toes.

Photo 7. Spinal twist right.

Photo 8. Handcuff forward.

to the rear slowly, then gradually increase the speed.

9. *Scratch back with left arm*—place your left hand on your back (behind your head), grab your left elbow with your right hand and pull your torso to the right (Photo 5).

10. *Scratch back with right arm*—place your right hand on your back (behind your head), grab your right elbow with your left hand and pull your torso to the left.

11. *Grab ankles*—sit down and straighten out your legs; reach forward and grab your ankles without bending your legs.

12. *Grab toes*—reach forward and grab your toes without bending your legs (Photo 6).

13. *Grab instep*—reach forward and grab your toes without bending your legs.

14. *Left foot to armpit*—keep your right leg straight, grab your left foot and pull it to your right armpit.

15. *Right foot to armpit*—straighten out your left leg, grab your right foot and pull it to your left armpit.

16. *Spinal twist right*—keep your left leg straight and place your right foot on the outside of your left knee; place your left elbow on the outside of your right knee and look to the right as far as possible (Photo 7).

17. *Spinal twist left*—straighten out your right leg and place your left foot on the outside of your right knee; place your right elbow on the outside of your left knee and look to the left as far as possible.

18. *Cannonball*—bring your knees into your chest, wrap your arms around your legs, tuck your chin and roll back and forth on the mat.

19. *Legs over*—after your last cannonball, bring your legs over your head, keeping your

legs straight.

20. *Front bridge*—from the legs over position, reach back and lay your palms flat on the mat near your head and execute a front bridge (face up).

21. *Back bridge*—spin your body so that you are now in a back bridge (face down).

22. *Quad stretch left leg*—lay on your right side, grab your left foot with your left hand and pull it back.

23. *Roll over*—roll to your left on to your back, tucking your left foot underneath your left buttocks.

24. *Quad stretch right leg*—lay on your left side, grab your right foot with your right hand and pull it back.

25. *Roll over*—roll to your right on to your back, tucking your right foot underneath your right buttocks.

### Partners

After completion of the entire individual program, each wrestler pairs up with a partner. One athlete takes the other through each of the eight partner stretches and then the two switch roles. Afterward, the team can begin drills.

The following is a brief description of each exercise in the partner flexibility program:

1. *Handcuff forward*—stand up and put your hands behind your back with your palms spaced a few feet apart and facing each other; have your partner grab your wrists from behind, slowly lifting your arms until they are parallel to the ground (keep your torso erect); at this point, have your partner slowly pull your hands together (Photo 8).

2. *Handcuff reverse*—keep your hands behind your back with your palms spaced a few feet apart and facing away from each

other; again, have your partner grab your wrists from behind, slowly lifting your arms until they are parallel to the ground (keep your torso erect); at this point, have your partner slowly pull your hands together.

3. *Butterfly*—sit down on the mat, place the soles of your feet together, draw your heels into your buttocks and reach forward as far as possible; have your partner place his hands on the insides of your knees and slowly push them down towards the mat; at the same time, he should lean on your upper back and slowly push your chest to the mat (Photo 9).

4. *Left sole to thigh*—straighten out your right leg, place the sole of your left foot against the inside of your right thigh and reach down your right leg as far as possible; have your partner lean on your upper back and slowly push your chest to your right thigh (Photo 10).

5. *Right sole to thigh*—straighten out your left leg, place the sole of your right foot against the inside of your left thigh and reach down your left leg as far as possible; have your partner lean on your upper back and slowly push your chest to your left thigh.

6. *Reach down the middle*—straighten out your legs, spread them out as far as possible and reach down the middle; have your partner lean on your upper back and slowly push your chest to the mat (Photo 11).

7. *Reach left*—keep your legs spread out as far as possible and reach down your left (Continued on Page 54)

## Table 1 Wrestling Flexibility Program

### I. Individual Program (3:40)

#### A. Neck (30 sec)

1. Forward (5 sec)
2. Back (5 sec)
3. Left (5 sec)
4. Right (5 sec)
5. Look left (5 sec)
6. Look right (5 sec)

#### B. Shoulders, triceps (40 sec)

1. Arm circles forward (10 sec)
2. Arm circles reverse (10 sec)
3. Scratch back with left arm (10 sec)
4. Scratch back with right arm (10 sec)

#### C. Lower back, gluteals, hamstrings, groin, calves (90 sec)

1. Grab ankles (10 sec)
2. Grab toes (10 sec)
3. Grab instep (10 sec)
4. Left foot to armpit (10 sec)
5. Right foot to armpit (10 sec)
6. Spinal twist right (10 sec)
7. Spinal twist left (10 sec)
8. Cannonball (10 sec)
9. Legs over (10 sec)

#### D. Neck (20 sec)

1. Front bridge (10 sec)
2. Back bridge (10 sec)

#### E. Quadriceps, hip flexors, abdomen (40 sec)

1. Quad stretch left leg (10 sec)
2. Roll over (10 sec)
3. Quad stretch right leg (10 sec)
4. Roll over (10 sec)

### II. Partner Program (1:20)

#### A. Chest, shoulders, biceps (20 sec)

1. Handcuff forward (10 sec)
2. Handcuff reverse (10 sec)

#### B. Lower back, gluteals, hamstrings, groin, calves (60 sec)

1. Butterfly (10 sec)
2. Left sole to thigh (10 sec)
3. Right sole to thigh (10 sec)
4. Reach down the middle (10 sec)
5. Reach left (10 sec)
6. Reach right (10 sec)

Photo 9. Butterfly.

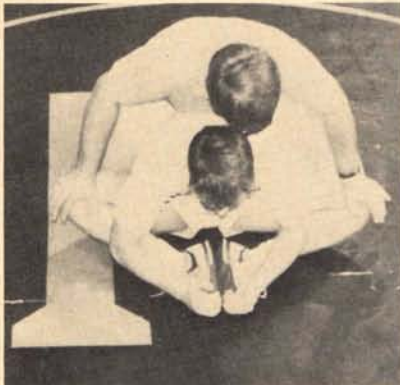


Photo 10. Left sole to thigh.

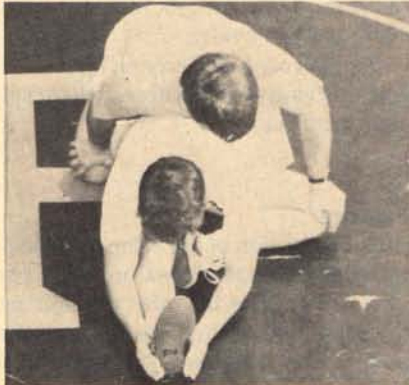


Photo 11. Reach down the middle.

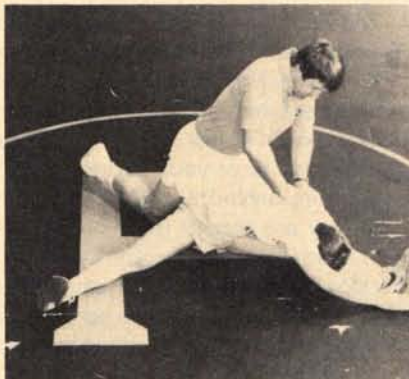


Photo 12. Reach left.

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# Wrestling

(Continued from Page 26)

back and slowly push your chest to your left thigh (Photo 12).

8. *Reach right*—keep your legs spread out as far as possible and reach down your right leg; have your partner lean on your upper back and slowly push your chest to your right thigh.

All athletes can improve their joint range of movement. However, heredity largely determines how flexible an athlete can become. Coaches should not compare one athlete's level of flexibility to another, nor should the athletes compete with each other. But rather, the competition should be within each individual to attain as great a degree of flexibility as they are genetically capable, thereby reducing their risk of incurring an injury. □

*Matt Brzycki received his bachelor's degree from Pennsylvania State University, where he also was vice-president of the Penn State Barbell Club and represented the school in intercollegiate powerlifting competition in the 165-pound class. He served on the health/fitness staff at Princeton until September, 1984, when he became assistant strength coach at Rutgers University.*



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