



RUNNING-SPECIFIC PASSIVE FLEXIBILITY

In the previous section, we looked in detail at **hip joint articulation with CARs**. That's a very "micro-look" at the joint itself, to see how it is moving.

In this area, we'll look more holistically – think of it as a global picture of hip oriented resting tissue (or muscle) length – which we'll call, at least for our purposes right now, **running-specific passive flexibility**.

Now you might be asking, "why is this a run-specific assessment?"

Here's why: The amount or relative level of passive flexibility that each person has is unique to them. *Some of us are quite flexible in our legs and hips – others are much less so.*

As an activity, distance running can have the longterm effect of leaving a distance runner on the "short end of the stick" so to speak – when it comes to muscle lengths. I'm speaking specifically of the legs (hamstrings and calves) and especially, the hips!

This can be especially true for aging runners as connective (soft) tissue like muscle and fascia become *less elastic and more fibrotic*.

This gradual "shortening" (sometimes thought of or interpreted as "tightness") can often turn into a negative result – especially for a runner – if it ends up reducing or compromising hip or ankle range of motion and reducing stride length, putting even more stress on the soft tissues and joints.

Now, at this point, you might be thinking to yourself – **"what's passive flexibility? What's the difference between it and mobility?"**

If that's the case, keep reading – we'll address that question right now before moving any further ahead.

Passive Flexibility – Mobility – Active Flexibility?

What are the differences? Does it matter? (You bet it does!)

One of the **important elements** that you will be reading and hearing MORE about as you move through this program is...

...the difference between **passive flexibility** and **mobility**...and how that impacts how we will train.

- We are assessing our **passive flexibility** and working on it to improve it, IF there's an opportunity to do so...
- And we are then training *control of that flexibility* and in effect, training **mobility**.

Now that we've brought some additional insight to the difference between passive flexibility and mobility, what's next?

We need to remember that when it comes to tissue length and flexibility, N=1! In other words, we're all unique.

The "sample" flexibility levels I'm sharing with you in the upcoming videos are those **I am demonstrating** – and I'm 60 years old as I type this, with more than 40 years of competitive running in my background! Let's just agree I'm not the most flexible person you'll find (times a hundred actually!)

What is the take-home point?

- **You may have TONS more passive flexibility than I do, especially if you are NOT A runner.**
That's great! It means you can put all of your focus into improving stability and strength at end range with PAILS / RAILS, without needing to focus on improving passive tissue length.
- **Conversely, you may have much less passive flexibility than I do, especially if you've ignored any kind of stretching or mobility work, OR have been injured in the past.**

- **It's quite likely you have some differences from one side to the other.** This is true whether you're a runner or not. Your goal is to work toward reducing the asymmetry – while also understanding that we are, by nature, asymmetrical. We can't, nor should we try, to create perfect symmetry.

Our goal with this flexibility assessment is simple:

We're seeking relative tissue balance around the hips – front and back – inside and out. Nothing more, nothing less.

We want to find where the greatest AREA OF OPPORTUNITY is for us as individuals, so we can work on it.


That area is likely a weak link in our "chain." Improve it, and everything gets better!

One last thing before I leave you to get started on your assessments:

This is only a starting point.

Once you get into the actual training, looking at passive stretching in these positions and doing some Progressive and Regressive Angular Isometric Loading (PAILs / RAILs), you'll very likely learn much more about yourself and find some "new" end ranges. That's OK! We're starting and moving in the right direction, that's what matters.

Take a look at your worksheet for these assessments. To PRINT a PDF of this worksheet, [CLICK HERE!](#)

Hip Mobility Self-Assessment Worksheet for Run-Specific Flexibility										
Use a sliding scale of 1 to 5 to grade YOUR muscle lengths for both sides.										
Record your assessment results below for each of the three run-specific flexibility assessments. Choose the number that best represents how you feel. The movement where you feel the least comfortable is where you have your greatest area of opportunity to improve! Spend the most amount of time there in the beginning of your training. Adjust and adapt as tissue length changes and improves.										
			For Your Right Hip/Side							
			Groin (or short adductors)		Hip Flexors (or anterior hip)		Shin-Box for hip rotators		Seated 90 - 90 for internal - external rotation	
			1 - I'm very flexible here.							
			2							
			3 - The tissues are moderately short.							
			4							
5 - I am so inflexible, it hurts!										
			For Your Left Hip/Side							
		Groin (or short adductors)		Hip Flexors (or anterior hip)		Shin-Box for hip rotators		Seated 90 - 90 for internal - external rotation		
1 - I'm very flexible here.										
2										
3 - The tissues are moderately short.										
4										
5 - I am so inflexible, it hurts!										

Be sure to watch the videos!