

How to Do a Split

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<http://gymnastics.about.com/od/trainingadvice/ss/frontsplit.htm>

Getting Started



A split is one of those moves that is really easy for some people and much harder for others. Even if you're as tight as can be, though, you'll still be able to master it if you work hard at your stretching.

A great way to get (or improve) your split is to move through a series of different stretches, from simple to advanced. If you are a beginner, you'll

probably want to master the easier stretches first before moving on to full split stretches.

Be sure to do each stretch on both sides – you'll want a good split on both your right leg and your left leg in order to be a great gymnast.

A Warning: *These tips are not meant in any way to replace a knowledgeable coach. About.com and Amy Van Deusen cannot be held responsible for any accidents in gymnastics – it is an inherently risky sport and you must be sure to take the necessary safety precautions such as proper progressions, the right matting and the use of spotters. By reading this article you agree that any advice you follow is at your own risk.*

Both Knees Bent Stretch

- From a kneeling position, put one foot in front of you on a mat, step, or other object about a foot or more off the ground.
- Bend your leg to 90 degrees, and place your foot flat on the mat.
- Keeping your hips facing the mat, move your other leg backwards, bending your knee behind you, until you form a "mini split" from knee to knee.
- Push your hips forward as much as possible, working towards 180 degrees from knee to knee.
- Keep your chest up and your hands on your front knee.
- Hold this stretch for 30-60 seconds at a time.



Front Leg Straight Stretch

- From a kneeling position, put one leg up straight in front of you onto the mat.
- Move your body back, so only your heel is on the mat.
- Your back leg should be at a 90 degree angle, and your hips should be “square” – they should be facing the mat, not turned one way or the other.
- Keeping your front leg straight, lean forward as far as possible.
- Hold this stretch for 30-60 seconds at a time.



Both Legs Straight Stretch



- From a standing position, put one leg on the mat in front of you.
- Keeping both legs straight and your hips square, lean forward as far as possible.
- Your back foot should be planted on the ground, with your foot straight or turned slightly out.

Full Split

Move to the floor and try a full split. In your split, be sure that:

- Your hips are square with your body. Your torso should be facing straight, not to the side, even if squaring your hips means you can't go down as far
- Both of your legs are straight, and turned slightly outward
- Your toes are pointed
- Your chest is up, not leaning forward

Beginner Hint: If you aren't yet flexible enough to do a split with your hands comfortably on the floor, try your split between two objects – mats, springboards (as shown), or even books can give you something to put your hands on. Then you'll be able to do the stretch without leaning forward with your body.





Square Out Your Split

To make sure your hips are square, try doing your split against a wall. Your back knee should be almost touching the wall, and your back leg should be bent at a 90 degree angle upward. Be sure that your back foot is pointing straight to the ceiling.

You can also do this stretch with a friend holding your leg and helping you to keep your foot pointing straight up.

Oversplits



If you can already do a square split on the floor, it's time to put your foot up on a mat. This stretches your legs even further into an oversplit – or a split more than 180 degrees.

For even more of a stretch, do your split between two mats or two springboards.

Ring Leap Stretch

Another progression for women is to work towards a [ring leap](#). To do this, arch backwards and bring your back leg up towards your head. A friend can help you with this by pulling on your arms and supporting your leg to help you keep it in position.

Your foot should come towards your head in a straight line, not at an angle (see photo).



RING LEAP

