ANIMAL FLOW

L1

WORKSHOP

STUDENT MANUAL

ANIMAL FLOW®

LEVEL ONE WORKSHOP
STUDENT MANUAL

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WELCOME FROM MIKE FITCH

Welcome to the Animal Flow® Level 1 Workshop!
Over the next two days, our primary goal is to impart an understanding of the benefits of QMT, the Four Pillars and the Six Components that make up the Animal Flow® system. Throughout the workshop, we'll emphasize the underlying concepts in this system including kinetic chains, fascial lines, functional movement, and the diverse cognitive and physical benefits of quadrupedal exercises.

My inspiration for creating this practice arose from the time I've spent with different bodyweight training disciplines inclusive of gymnastics, parkour, breakdancing, and hand balancing. While I thoroughly enjoyed these movement styles, I wanted to create a program that was easily digestible and applicable to the average person's fitness training. I leaned on principles from these bodyweight practices along with my own years of experience in the fitness industry to create what I hoped would help improve the function and resilience of the "human animal" while helping participants become better and more connected movers.

I by no means take credit for inventing the use of animal locomotion patterns or the concept of Flow itself. Such parallels exist between movement modalities extending back thousands of years and they are a testament to the exploration of the human body as an incredible tool. The way in which we teach and apply the movements is with the intention of positively impacting the way a person experiences their bodies long-term. We will provide insight into the purpose and intention of each movement in order to help you better apply them within your practice or profession.

It is important to keep in mind that Animal Flow® is a versatile practice that can be used however it best serves you: It is what you choose to make of it. At the end of two days, you'll have learned how to execute the techniques, how to identify when regressions/progressions are needed, how to coach and Call Out to others, and where to begin your practice.

It is a pleasure to invite you to our global community and I hope you'll enjoy this style of training as much as I do.
Let's get started!

MIKE FITCH
Creator, Animal Flow

ANIMAL FLOW

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO ANIMAL FLOW

QUADRUPEDAL MOVEMENT TRAINING (QMT)

Animal Flow is a very specific type of Quadrupedal Movement Training. But what is QMT? When broken down word by word, Quadrupedal indicates that there are 4 points of contact with the ground, Movement means we're experiencing motion in multiple planes with variable loads, and Training is evidently indicating a type of practice. QMT is a relatively new area of research and most of the studies have utilized Animal Flow systems to study the effects of QMT on the body and brain. The benefits uncovered from these studies range from notable increases in mobility, functional capacity, trunk activation, and even cognitive function. Just a small dose of weekly QMT has also been shown to decrease low back pain. Those in the community will also attest to it being fun, but we don't need research to determine that!

When most people hear the name Animal Flow, they assume they're going to be mimicking animals. However, while we do use some traveling forms, the "animal" in Animal Flow refers to the Human animal. As such, QMT is simply tapping into the ability to improve our connection, communication, and function by putting our hands and feet in contact with the ground.

WHAT IS ANIMAL FLOW®?

At its very core, Animal Flow is a system that bridges the gap between all other physical practices, in pursuit of previously unknown levels of physical proficiency. It is built on four pillars: Connection, Performance, Resilience, and Community.

PILLAR #1: CONNECTION

Because the overall goal of the system is to improve the function of the human animal, our first pillar is centered on the brain to body connection and increased system-wide communication that comes from being in contact with the ground. This, in turn, facilitates the process of discovering new motor tasks, increasing awareness of our bodies in space and keeping our attention directed inward to our body. We can use "connection" interchangeably with "communication" as we are encouraging people to take ownership for how they move their vessel through space. Ultimately, this ability to connect will drive up mindfulness, cognition, and proprioception.

PILLAR #2: PERFORMANCE

When looking at the demands of any sport or activity, it is beneficial to look at the physical requirements that may be needed: We can describe these necessary attributes as "biomotor abilities" which essentially means physical abilities. A few that may come to mind are strength, power, coordination, balance, speed, endurance, flexibility, mobility. Most individuals will preferentially bias one or two of the abilities listed when solely focused on a sport or type of practice. For example, we may have a soccer player who works on their ability to have speed and endurance, a weightlifter who chooses to focus on strength and power, or a yoga practitioner who exhibits the abilities of flexibility and balance. If we then consider the concept of building a more complete and high-functioning human animal, it encourages us to look at all the biomotor abilities that may not be addressed. In this case, can we make the soccer player stronger and more coordinated, the yogi more dynamic (speed/power), and the weightlifter more pliable (mobile/flexible). Animal Flow was designed as a way to fill in the gaps in one's training; we use it as an adhesive to pull the biomotor abilities together.

PILLAR #3: RESILIENCE

The human body is an adaptation machine. It can recover from or adjust easily to change, is constantly figuring out ways to become more efficient at any consistent task and can endure repetitive stressors. Being adaptive in this fashion allows us to build our capacity for sports, workouts, and life alike. That said, the stressors must be consistent, not too much and not too little, and most importantly, they have to be specific. This law of specificity is also know as the *SAID* principle.

SAID (Specific Adaptations to Imposed Demands) is the basic principle behind all exercise: It states that the type of exercise stimulus (the stressors) placed on the body will determine the expected physiological outcome. Every system in the body (e.g neural, endocrine, muscular, skeletal, etc) will respond and adapt to the specific physical demands applied. Keep in mind, however, that this repetitive stress could very easily lead to a negative scenario within the musculoskeletal system over time if an individual performs the same movements, in the same ***planes of motion***, at the same joint positions, day after day.

In order to make our joints, muscle and connective tissue more resilient with the aim of potentially lessening the likelihood of injuries, we add variety. To do so, we break the patterns of repetitive stress in singular directions and add good mechanical stressors to

the tissues of the body, in all directions, and at as many joint angles as possible. This is where Animal Flow is so advantageous for the resilience of the body as it imposes variable and novel loads in a quadrupedal position, encouraging all tissues to withstand stressors, bounce back, and perform longer. This ability to endure, without injury or degradation, is resilience.

PILLAR #4: COMMUNITY

Humans are wired to connect with each other and doing so can positively impact every aspect of health inclusive of improving the odds of survival when compared to social isolation. From the very first Animal Flow class in 2010, it became clear that the participants were forming a bond around their shared experience. As classes continued, Flowists were not only showing up for the movement but also to support, connect with, and positively challenge each other. Thanks in part to this, the cultivation of community was built on the concept of creating a space where everyone could feel safe to learn- and occasionally, fail.

This self-focused practice benefits from being in the supportive company of others also seeking and moving towards a better understanding of their bodies. Over the past decade, the AF community has grown to a global scale spanning 42 countries and has a strong family dynamic. If this is your first experience with Animal Flow, welcome to the family.

THE SIX COMPONENTS OF ANIMAL FLOW

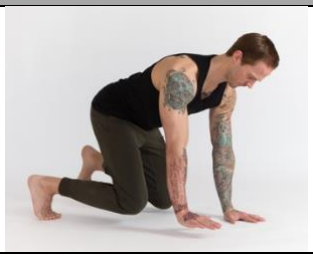
Animal Flow includes a wide range of exercises and movement combinations that are grouped into Six Components, each designed to elicit specific results. The Six Components can be mixed and matched in many ways, allowing you to incorporate one, some, or all of them in your workouts. The six components include:

COMPONENT 1: WRIST MOBILIZATIONS	
	*WRIST MOBILIZATIONS* are simple yet effective movements used to prepare the hands and wrists for the challenges of Animal Flow. Healthy wrists are so important to the success of both novice and experienced Flowists, that it's always our first component.

Wrist Mobilizations:

- are mobility drills performed before, during, and after Animal Flow practice
- are primarily passive exercises

- may increase the flow of blood, oxygen and nutrients to the soft tissue in and around the wrists
- provide an opportunity to gauge any pain, discomfort or restrictions that may be present; and
- prepare the wrists for the demands of quadrupedal movement and minimize the development of performance-reducing inflammation and discomfort.

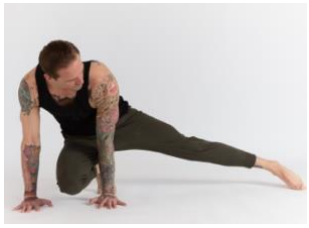
COMPONENT 2: BEAST ACTIVATIONS	
	*ACTIVATIONS* are a way of "waking up" the body and encouraging it to communicate. The Animal Flow practice uses two activation positions, Beast and Crab, which serve as foundations in the overall program.

Activations are static/isometric holds that are systematically progressed by decreasing the points of contact with the ground.

These positions focus on "setting the system" for movement. They can be used to gather information or assess the body's global stability. Not only are they great assessment tools, but also can be used as part of a corrective exercise strategy. You'll notice these holds are intimately linked with the muscular subsystems and chains that make movement possible.

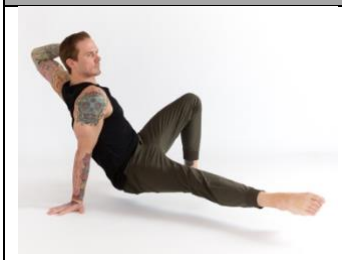
COMPONENT 3: FORM SPECIFIC STRETCHES (FSS)	
	*FORM SPECIFIC STRETCHES* are full body stretches that begin in a base position, then actively move through various ranges of motion. The goal of the FSSs is to encourage a combination of flexibility and stability (i.e. mobility) throughout the body's many articulations.

You'll find that the FSSs are not intended to be completely passive, as the goal is to create "strength through motion". However, you can hold them as an isometric position, or dynamically move into and out of them. FSSs can also be integrated into your flow design. Examples include: *APE REACH*, *CRAB REACH*, and *SCORPION REACH*.

COMPONENT 4: TRAVELING FORMS	
	*TRAVELING FORMS* are our animal locomotion movements. They represent the way we mimic animals to improve the function of the 'Human Animal'. We group these forms into the ABCs of our base positions: Ape, Beast, and Crab, along with their variations.

Although you may have experienced animal movements before, in Animal Flow they are taught with extremely precise parameters in order to improve upon the biomechanics of the human body.

The Traveling Forms are extremely versatile in their applications. They can be used as warm-ups, cool downs, metabolic conditioning, active rest, neural re-patterning, and more.

COMPONENT 5: SWITCHES AND TRANSITIONS (S&T)	
	*SWITCHES AND TRANSITIONS (S&T)* make up the bulk of the "flow" in the Animal Flow practice. These are dynamic movements that can be linked together to form endless combinations or can stand alone as a powerful exercise or drill.

In the Level 1 workshop, you'll learn each of the four categories of S&Ts, as well as their variations. The four categories are *UNDERSWITCH*, *SIDE KICKTHROUGH*, *SCORPION* and *FRONT KICKTHROUGH*.

COMPONENT 6: FLOWS	
	*FLOWS* are where all of the Animal Flow components come together. Flows can be performed in many ways, but there are 3 main styles: Choreographed, Freestyle Call-Outs, and Free Flow. The potential combinations within each style are almost endless. In Level 1, flows are comprised of movements from the *FSS* and *S&T* components.

- A **Choreographed Flow** is designed with the intention of practicing it in order to become as seamless and fluid as possible. This would be similar to a dance or gymnastics routine.
- A **Freestyle Call Out** has the Instructor (or a fellow practitioner) calling out moves one after the other, while the Flowist follows along in real time. The focus in this case is on reaction time and precision. This can be very similar to a game of "Simon Says". Performing Call Outs correctly relies heavily on having a strong command of the Animal Flow Language which will be emphasized throughout the Level 1 course.
- **Free Flow** is where you are free to practice a flow without pre-planning or listening to a call out. Your focus may vary depending on your goals that day - endurance, creativity, movement meditation, fluidity, improving the technical execution of the moves, and more.

At the end of Day 2, you will learn a choreographed flow, known as "The Beast Flow." This flow is just one example of the infinite possibilities in flow design. It is a blueprint to show you how the FSS and S&T pieces can fit together. Understanding the correct way to design flows will be part of your test out and essential to you becoming an Animal Flow Certified Instructor.

CHAPTER 2

THE SCIENCE OF ANIMAL FLOW

The Animal Flow program certainly evokes a sense of fun and creativity, but it is still at its heart based solidly in science. It draws upon multiple, proven concepts within exercise science and kinesiology to formulate its overall approach to fitness and movement. The program is structured around several factors that contribute to its grounding in scientific research: It is entirely bodyweight training based, using closed-chain exercises to achieve goals; it emphasizes multi-planar and functional movement focused on anatomical subsystems; it is designed to integrate into a range of fitness programs and resistance training models; and it provides for assessment, regression, and progression with each step.

THE HUMAN BODY AND MOVEMENT

Before we dive into the specifics of Animal Flow and its benefits for the human system, it's relevant to begin with our view of the body.
If you've spent time studying anatomy in some form, then it's likely that you've been exposed (at the very least in the earliest stages of study) to a compartmentalized view of the human body. In this view, the skeletal system provides the foundations and scaffolding that supports the many various other systems (such as the muscular, circulatory, and respiratory systems) that contribute to human movement.

There is much that we don't know about the human body, yet literature now abounds in support of an integrated system approach, where no process or operation occurs in isolation. While it can be helpful to take a simplistic approach by looking at individual muscles and joints, it's vital to remember that we are infinitely more complex and integrated machines.

Animal Flow is comprised wholly of multi-joint movements that are based on the premise of known integrated patterns in the body. With that said, each movement is only as good as the sum of its parts.

MUSCLE SYNERGIES AND FASCIA

Muscle Synergies

In order to create movement, the Central Nervous System optimizes the selection of muscle synergies, not isolated muscles. Examples of these muscle synergies of movement, can be described as "global muscular systems" (NASM Corrective Exercise).

The global muscular systems are responsible predominately for movement and consist of superficial musculature that originate from the pelvis to the rib cage, the lower extremities, or both. Exercises that focus on working these groups through the entire sling provide excellent benefits for improving the way we walk, run, and move (Liebension 2004; Pool-Goudzwaard 1998).

The movement system muscles have been broken down and described as force-couples, working in four distinct subsystems (NASM):

- ***Deep Longitudinal***
- ***Anterior Oblique***
- ***Posterior Oblique***
- ***Lateral Subsystem***

These subsystems are intimately linked with the global flexion and extension chains of the human body. These chains are typically known as the:

- ***Anterior (flexion) Chain***
- ***Posterior (extensor) Chain***

What is the Anterior/Flexion Chain?
Including the pectorals, abdominal musculature, hip flexors and quadriceps, the Flexion (or Anterior) Chain is responsible for spinal and hip flexion, assists to create pelvic stability, and eccentrically decelerates extension of the spine and hip.
What is the Posterior/Extensor Chain?
A direct counterpart to the Flexion Chain, the Extensor (or Posterior) Chain includes the spinal erectors, trapezius, posterior deltoids, gluteals, hamstrings and calves. This chain plays a critical role in keeping our bodies in their upright postures by facilitating hip and spine extension.

What is the Anterior Oblique Sling?

The Anterior Oblique Sling helps to create stability through the spine and hip, while also acting as a means of force transmission between the upper and lower limbs. It also opposes the Posterior Oblique Sling by decelerating the movements of spinal extension and rotation.

- Obliques
- Adductors
- Rectus abdominis
- Pectoralis major
- Serratus anterior

What is the Posterior Oblique Sling?

The Posterior Oblique Sling provides opposition to the flexion and rotation created through the body by the Anterior Oblique Sling. Movements that require us to pull and rotate are informed by the Posterior Oblique Sling, while spinal flexion, hip flexion, as well as hip internal rotation and adduction, are all decelerated by it.

- Gluteals
- Thoracolumbar fascia
- Contralateral latissimus dorsi
- Lower trapezius

What is the Lateral Subsystem?

Ever wondered how you manage to keep your hips steady when you walk up a flight of steps? That's the Lateral Subsystem. Largely responsible for stabilizing the pelvis and spine, the Lateral Subsystem plays a critical role in gait and single-leg movement.

- Gluteus medius
- Adductors
- Tensor fascia latae
- Contralateral quadratus lumborum

What is the Deep Longitudinal Subsystem?
This particular subsystem is all about stabilizing the body longitudinally, between the foot and ankle, and the torso, in both directions. - Erector spinae - Thoracolumbar fascia - Sacrotuberous ligament - Bicep femoris

While the explanations above provide a succinct and compartmentalized way to view muscle synergies, it's important to remember that all subsystems and chains contribute to all movement to varying degrees.

Fascia

The movement capabilities of the human body do not rely on the muscular systems alone. These subsystems would not be able to properly do their job without the vital role that fascia plays.

Remember that compartmentalized view of the human body that we mentioned before, with the skeleton acting like a continuous compression structure, similar to that of a house? We now understand that to be a somewhat limited perspective. Thanks largely in part to fascia, our bodies are tension-dependent structures – we're much more like a mobile but stable tensegrity ('tension' and 'integrity') model than the immovable foundations of a house. We're an intricate balance of tension and compression, with the fascia and muscles working together to suspend the skeleton. This means that rather than our bones holding everything up, they actually 'float' inside the soft tissue, resulting in our bodies acting to distribute strain across the entire structure.

Fascia is a type of soft tissue, but also an entire system that forms a whole-body, continuous three-dimensional matrix of structural support around our organs, muscles, joints, bones and nerves. This multidirectional, multidimensional fascial arrangement is also what allows us to move in multiple directions.

You can think of this continuous fascial net as our 'soft skeleton'.

> "…imagine a silvery-white material, flexible and sturdy in equal measure – a substance that surrounds and penetrates every muscle, coats every bone, covers every organ, and envelops every nerve. Fascia keeps everything separate yet interconnected at the same time." (Lesondak 2017).

To gain a visual image of how fascia is connected: picture the film or wrap that you cover your food up with when it goes into the refrigerator. What happens when the two sides accidently touch? It can be an impossible task trying to pull this stuff apart when those two surfaces stick to each other. This wrap is also very similar in principle to *fascia* within the body.

Lesondak, in his book *Fascia: What it is and why it matters* identifies four categories of fascia based on location.

1. **Superficial fascia**. This is the layer that sits between our skin and muscle, facilitating the 'slide and glide' action between the two. Superficial fascia plays a role in managing our body temperature, our circulation, and waste product removal (via the lymphatic system).
2. **Deep fascia**. This is the layer that is responsible for the transmission of myofascial force. The deep fascia is a "dense, well-organized fibrous layer that covers muscles" and helps to disperse muscular tension.
3. **Meningeal fascia** is the fascia that envelops the brain and nervous system.
4. **Visceral fascia** surrounds the heart, lungs, and organs in the abdominal cavity.

Fascia is incredibly important for health, movement, and athletic performance. Some of the most important points include:

- ✓ **Stress reduction**: Fascia helps reduce stress in a particular muscle, joint or bone, by spreading forces across the body.
- ✓ **Energy conservation**: Fascia also helps to conserve energy. By stretching and loading (like an elastic band) it helps harness momentum created from movement, so rather than using energy wastefully, energy can in effect be recycled thanks to the elastic properties of fascia.
- ✓ **Communication and reaction time**: Research suggests that connective tissue like fascia has a large proprioceptive input to the nervous system, i.e. it is sensitive and communicates! Indeed, there may be up to 10 times more proprioceptors in fascia than in muscle (Stecco et al 2010). Proprioceptors effectively provide input to the CNS, which in turn provides information about what positions the joints are in, how fast the joints are moving, and how much stress or tension the joints are experiencing.

Therefore, the fascial matrix which covers the entire body helps us react to our environment faster than the conscious mind can respond.

Combining Muscular Subsystems and Fascia

Thomas Myers provides an excellent overview of fascia in his book Anatomy Trains (Myers 2001). He detailed a network of fascial lines that run in various directions, connecting the entire body. From an anatomical perspective, the muscular subsystems and chains described above also have distinct congruencies with the fascial lines he proposed.

The chart below demonstrates how Myers' fascial lines are similar to each of the muscular subsystems.

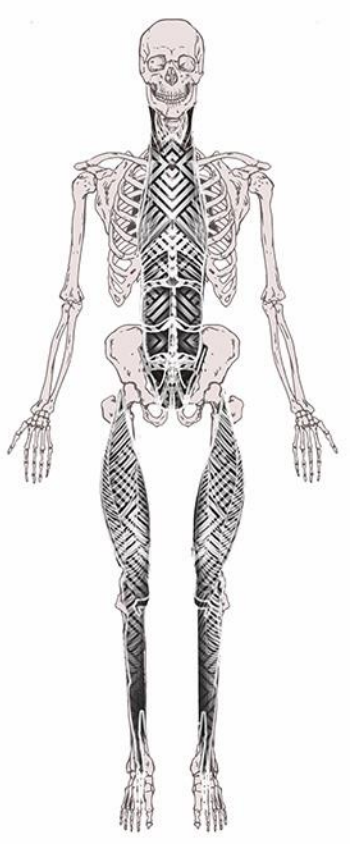
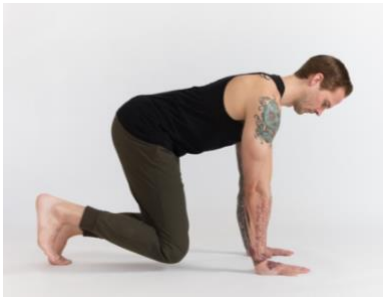
MUSCULAR SUBSYSTEMS	MYERS' FASCIAL LINES
Flexion Chain	Superficial Front Line
Posterior Chain	Superficial Back Line
Posterior Oblique Sling	Back Functional Line
Anterior Oblique Sling	Front Functional Line
Lateral Subsystem	Lateral Line

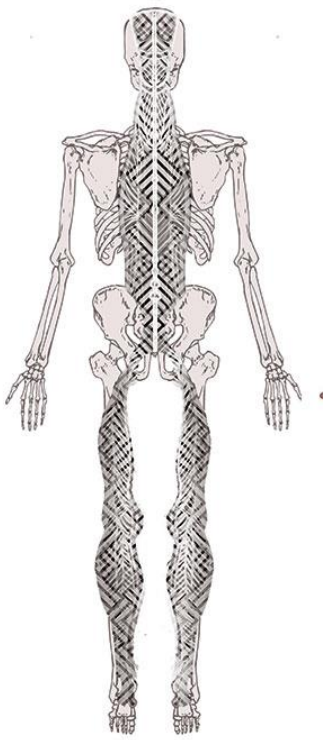
Both the muscular subsystems and fascial networks work simultaneously to produce complex movements that are effective and efficient, providing proprioceptive information and distributing/dissipating forces. Throughout the Animal Flow workshop, these concepts will be a staple part of the understanding and application of the AF movements.

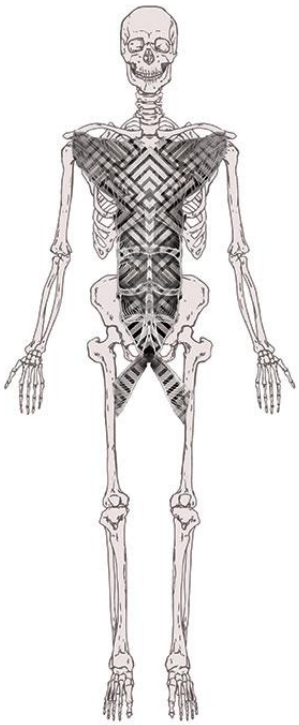
Over the course of the workshop, as you work through the movements covered in Chapter 3, consider each movement critically and try to identify the primary subsystem/fascial line that is emphasized. The following pages visually highlight the relationship between the fascia (as defined by Myers' Anatomy Trains), muscle synergies, and key corresponding movements from the Animal Flow library.

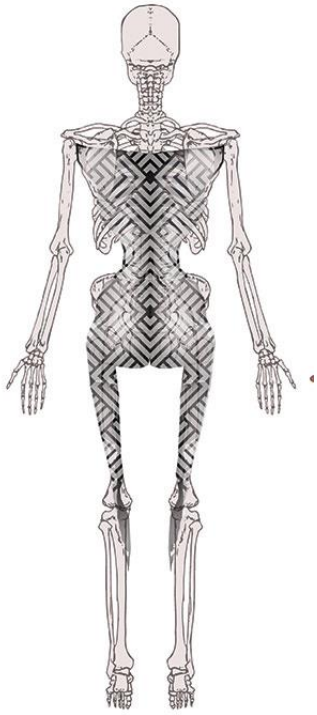
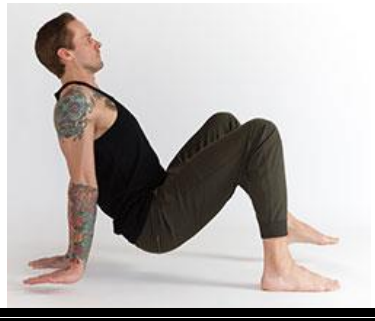
FASCIA, MUSCLE SYNERGIES, AND ANIMAL FLOW

In the diagrams below, we've displayed representations of the fascial lines (skeleton figures on left) and muscle synergies (figures in center), along with some sample corresponding Animal Flow movements that emphasize the line/chain/sling.

Superficial Front Line	Flexion Chain	AF Examples
		**STATIC BEAST**  **FRONT KICKTHROUGH** 

Superficial Back Line	Extension Chain	AF Examples
		**WAVE UNLOAD**  **STATIC CRAB** 

Front Functional Line	Anterior Oblique Sling	AF Examples
		**SIDE KICKTHROUGH**  **CONTRALATERAL BEAST ACTIVATION (LIMB LIFT)** 

Back Functional Line	Posterior Oblique Sling	AF Examples
		**FRONT STEP**  **CONTRALATERAL CRAB ACTIVATION (LIMB LIFT)** 

Lateral Line	Lateral Subsystem	AF Examples
		**UNDERSWITCH**  **LATERAL APE (V3)** 

BENEFITS OF QUADRUPEDAL MOVEMENT

Quadrupedal positions, with both hands and both feet on the ground, form the bases found in Animal Flow. There is growing evidence supporting the efficacy of movement based around quadrupedal movements and postures.

> "The coordination between arms and legs during human locomotion shares many features with that in quadrupeds, including reliance on propriospinal connections." (Sylos-Labini 2014).

Crawling

Learning to crawl plays an important role in our early neurodevelopmental stages. A baby experiences the process of locomotion through both reptilian and mammalian crawling phases. These phases are incredibly important for developing neural coordination, while simultaneously building muscle synergies that will be the foundation for bipedal gait.

Crawling benefits include:

- ✓ Stimulating and organizing neurons to help cognitive processes like comprehension, concentration and memory
- ✓ Establishing hand/eye coordination important for reading, writing and sports activities
- ✓ Conditioning binocular vision, i.e. looking off into the distance and then back at the hands
- ✓ Strengthening both the left and right side of the brain by practicing cross-lateral movement, which allows increased communication between the two sides of the brain and enhancing learning

The benefits of quadrupedal movement are not just reserved for the young.

Lee Burton and Gray Cook (2012), developers of the Functional Movement Screen (FMS), emphasize the importance of what they call "primitive movement patterns," (i.e. rolling, pushing, quadruped, and crawling) in providing a strong foundation for developing effective functional movement. Referencing the long-standing usage of primitive patterns in physical therapy practices, they recommend that fitness professionals utilize these patterns to identify problem areas, and in particular to focus

on the stabilizers, rather than prime movers. Burton and Cook's primitive patterns are similar to some of the positions utilized in Animal Flow. For example, the Static Beast Activations are used to identify asymmetries and imbalances in one's rotary stability system.

There is much support regarding the benefits of stabilizing the body in a quadrupedal form; partly due to the closed-chain nature of the position as well as the requirement to actively engage the body's core. Research into the benefits of more complex quadrupedal movements for adults is still a newer field. There has, however, been at least one peer-reviewed published study documenting the cognitive benefits for adults using quadrupedal movement training (QMT). This study has specifically used Animal Flow movements for its four-week quadrupedal training program for participants.

The study, "*Quadrupedal movement training improves markers of cognition and joint repositioning,*" (Matthews et al, 2016) found the following conclusion:

> Performance of a novel, progressive, and challenging task, requiring the coordination of all 4 limbs, has a beneficial impact on cognitive flexibility, and in joint reposition sense, although only at the specific joint angle directly targeted by the training. The findings are consistent with other studies showing improvements in executive function and joint reposition sense following physical activity.

A second study also utilized Animal Flow movements for its eight-week quadrupedal training program to assess the impact of QMT on functional movement, dynamic balance, range of motion, and upper body strength and endurance.

The study, "*The Effects of a Novel Quadrupedal Movement Training Program on Functional Movement, Range of Motion, Muscular Strength, and Endurance*," (Buxton et al, 2020) concluded that:

> The QMT group showed significantly greater improvements than the [control] group in FMS composite score, FMS advanced movements, and fundamental stability, along with hip flexion, hip lateral rotation, and shoulder extension Our results indicate that QMT can improve FMS scores and various active joint ranges of motion. Quadrupedal movement training is a viable alternative form of training to improve whole-body stabilization and flexibility.

**The full articles are available at animalflow.com > About > Science of AF*

Communication

Communication is one of the central benefits of the Animal Flow practice. This includes not only the communication that one has consciously with their body (sense of self/ spatial awareness) but also the interconnected communication throughout the human movement system (nervous, muscular and skeletal).

Proprioception

One of the ways that the body communicates with itself to produce safe movement is by relying on feedback from receptors that are constantly gathering information about both the internal body as well as the external environment. This information is considered proprioception.

Here's a useful description of proprioception from NASM:

> Proprioception is one form of sensory (afferent) information that uses mechanoreceptors (from cutaneous, muscle, tendon, and joint receptors) to provide information about static and dynamic positions, movements, and sensations related to muscle force and movement. Lephart defines proprioception as the cumulative neural input from sensory afferents to the central nervous system. This vital information ensures optimum motor behavior and neuromuscular efficiency. This afferent information is delivered to different levels of motor control within the central nervous system to use in monitoring and manipulating movement (NASM Essentials of Corrective Exercise).

Interlimb neural coupling

It may seem strange, but there's a fascinating neural connection that exists between your arms and your legs. If you've spent any time in a CrossFit box, it's likely that you've seen someone performing handstand walks, their legs moving in opposition to their arms. This example is interlimb neural coupling in action. Why does this happen?

In the 2016 paper titled *Neuromechanical interactions between the limbs during human locomotion: an evolutionary perspective with translation to rehabilitation*, Zehr et al. offer this:

> "Evidence accumulated in humans suggests that the basic neural elements controlling and coupling the arms and legs during coordinated rhythmic movements are similar to those in habitually quadrupedal animals."

It's believed that these shared neural networks known as central pattern generators have remained relatively untouched by evolution and are commonly shared by animals of all kinds. (Geurin 2013.)

Next time you're walking, take notice of how your arms move unconsciously, or go for a run and see how your leg turnover increases if you pump your arms faster – both of these are examples of the interconnected nature of the upper and lower extremities.

Sensory Information

Both the feet and hands have an incredibly high number of sensory receptors. This makes for a proprioceptively rich environment when the hands and feet are in contact with the ground, as in quadruped. But the information feed doesn't just stop there. As mentioned above, there are mechanoreceptors in muscle, tendon and joints that are sensitive to load. In the quadrupedal position, almost every articulation and its corresponding soft tissue is loaded by the body's own weight, as it resists the downward pull of gravity.

All of this information sets the stage for the body to communicate on a very high level. The hips must speak to the shoulders, through the spine, out to the limbs and vice versa.

This communication advantage is further explained in the concept of Closed-Chain Exercise

Vestibular perception

In addition, once you get into the practice of Animal Flow, you'll note that there are plenty of opportunities for repetitive rotations through movements such as Underswitches and Full Scorpions. For some new Flowists, repetitive rotary movements can induce dizziness, but the great news is that long-term training could possibly result in adaptations to the vestibular system. These include possible uncoupling of reflex and perception when exposed to a vestibular stimulus, and even changes in brain matter that correlates with vertigo resistance. (Nigmatullina et al. 2015).

Closed Chain Exercises

All movements within Animal Flow are closed-chain exercises, which means that limbs connect to the ground or another object in a constant, fixed position, and resistance is created by pushing or pulling against it, moving the body, rather than the object.

Closed-chain exercises can lead to greater motor unit activation and synchronization (NASM 2012), and controlled studies have documented enhanced performance when utilizing closed-chain form of weight training compared to open-chain (Augustsson et al 1998; Brindle 2006). The biomechanics of closed-chain exercises mean that multiple joints and multiple muscle groups are worked at once, making them a "functional" form of exercise likely to produce superior results. The multiple joint and muscle action is considered more functional because real-life daily activities and sports activities tend to require utilization of multiple muscles, rather than isolated muscles and joint actions.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF ANIMAL FLOW

Animal Flow is a truly 100% bodyweight-training program, which requires no equipment and utilizes only the individual's own bodyweight and gravity as resistance. Bodyweight training in general has long been accepted as an effective means of exercise, with numerous studies demonstrating that it is equal to or better than other forms of exercise (Harman et al 2008; McRae et al; NASM 2012; Ozer et al).

Multi-planar movements

Bodyweight training also includes multi-planar aspects that produce greater kinesthetic awareness (NASM 2012) and are functional in nature.

The benefits of multi-planar training are closely related to those described with closed-chain exercises. Just as with closed-chain exercises, the goal with multi-planar training is to utilize the entire body to move and/or stabilize instead of working an isolated muscle. Most day-to-day activities and resistance training programs are sagittal plane dominant. The lack of training in the transverse plane can lead to more injuries resulting from rotations and/or pattern overload, making it even more important to pay more attention to this area.

By involving all of the major muscle groups, multi-planar training provides a balanced training approach that helps increase overall function and decreases the risk of injury. As the movements are made more complex, the CNS is stimulated to create and refine motor engrams applicable to sport and life making it a particularly functional form of training (Quelch 2007). Going even farther, tri-planar movement, which incorporates all three of the sagittal, frontal, and transverse planes of motion, is considered a particularly progressive form of fitness training (Quelch 2007).

Animal Flow aims to engage in these complex, multi-planar movement patterns through the combination of movements, many of which are already multi-planar on their own, into longer "flows," where the body is constantly changing direction, tempo, and plane. Multi-planar, functional exercise attempts to reproduce the movements that the kinetic chain undergoes during normal activities of daily life and sport.

Leverage

The ability to regress or progress movements to meet the needs of individual participants without needing any additional equipment is an important component of Animal Flow. As with all bodyweight training disciplines, Animal Flow employs the concept of leverage as one of the primary means of increasing or decreasing the difficulty of specific moves. It is a basic tenant of bodyweight training that changes in body position – i.e. leverage - have a direct and significant impact on the amount of force production, muscular activation, and myoelectrical activity (Cogley et al; Garcia Masso et al). A number of studies have used analysis of push-up position variations to measure how something as simple as hand position can significantly influence muscle activity (Gouvali and Boudolos 2005; Suprak et al 2011).

Understanding the role of leverage in affecting the requirements and results of any given exercise is integral to the Animal Flow® program; thus, much time is spent reviewing highly specific body positions for each movement. Emphasis is placed on understanding how adjusting body positions including hand placement, foot placement, or joint angles can increase or decrease the difficulty of a movement for a participant.

Ground Reaction Forces

"For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction." This is Newton's 3rd Law of Motion. Regardless of whether you're standing still or jumping up and down, you're dealing with ground reaction force – the reciprocal force relationship that is being exerted on, and by your body at all times. For every pound or kilogram of force that you express down into the ground, the same amount of force is being experienced by your system. In Animal Flow, we use these ground reaction forces to our advantage, helping us distribute strain, develop strength and experience healthy stress. This mechanism occurs when we find ourselves fighting gravity while in a quadrupedal position.

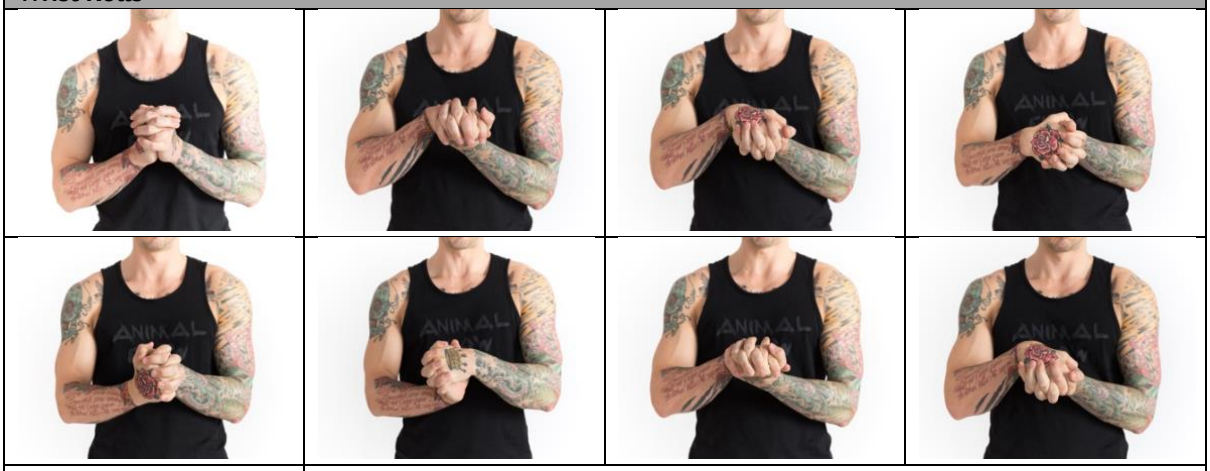
CHAPTER 3

THE SIX COMPONENTS

WRIST MOBILIZATIONS

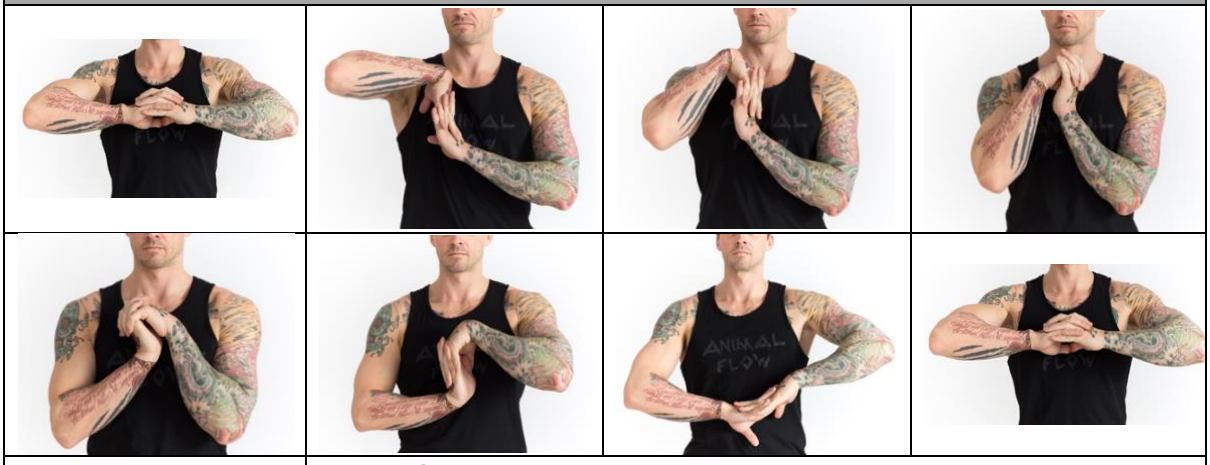
WRIST ROLLS - WRIST WAVES - LATERAL WRIST
WRIST ROCKS - MAGNETIC WRISTS - WRIST RELIEF

Wrist Rolls

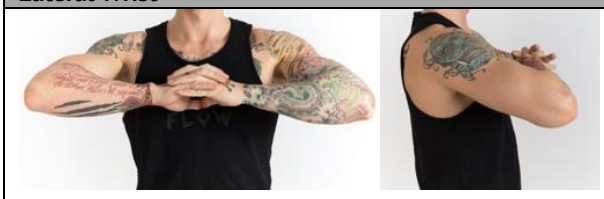
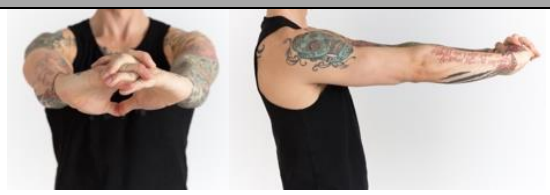


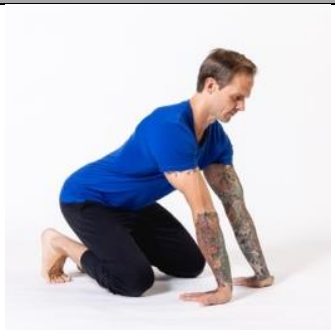
Top Row	- Start by clasping your hands together at chest height. - Keeping the hands clasped, gently roll one hand over the other by moving at the wrist. The top wrist will flex as the bottom one extends.
Bottom Row	- Continue the rotation of one hand over the other to create a full circular motion at the wrists in one direction.
Repeat for 30 seconds then switch and perform the wrist rolls in the opposite direction. **Stay away from any painful ranges.*	

Wrist Waves

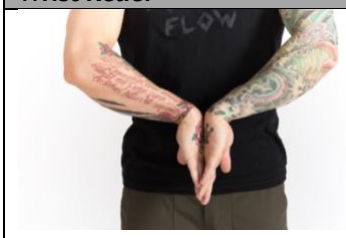
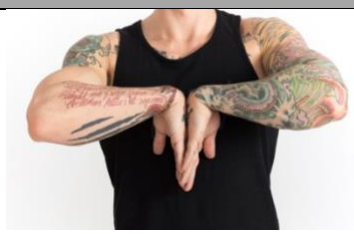
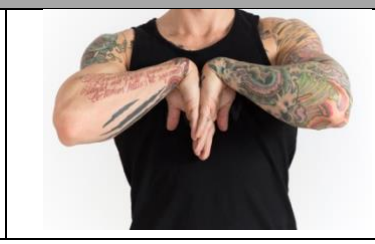


Top Row	- Start with the fingers clasped together, palms facing the floor and elbows held out to the sides. - Initiate the wave by lifting an elbow up. The wave will travel through the same side wrist, through the hands and fingers.
Bottom Row	- Continue to pass the wave through to the opposite wrist and elbow. - Finish by flattening out the arms, elbows to the sides, to start a wave in the same direction again by lifting the first elbow again.
Repeat for 30 seconds then switch and perform the wrist waves in the opposite direction.	

Lateral Wrist	
	
- Start with the hands clasped together at chest height with the elbows held out to the side and the thumbs pointing in towards the sternum. - Keep the palms down to the ground the entire time and the thumbs pressing together. - Drive the hands away from the body, keeping the palms towards the ground and allowing the lateral aspect of the wrist to open. The elbows may or may not fully extend. - Bring the hands back towards the start position.	
Repeat for 30 seconds.	

Wrist Rocks – Palms Down	
	
- In a kneeling position, set up with your hands shoulder width apart, fingers pointing back towards toes, and toes tucked under. - Keep palms in contact with the ground and elbows extended throughout the movement.	- To initiate motion, gently rock back, moving the hips towards the heels. - Gently rock forward, returning to the start position.
Repeat the motion, slowly rocking back and forth for 30s.	

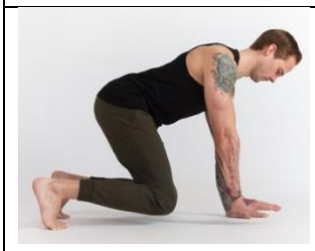
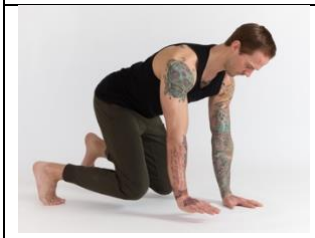
Magnetic Wrists	
	
Top Row	- Imagine that the wrists have magnetic bracelets keeping them connected throughout the movement. - Start with the hands held at chest height, palm side of the wrists pressing into one another, hands splayed. - Move the thumb across the palm and reach forward with the arms, allowing the arms to rotate and the thumb side of the wrists begin to press together. Hands continue to splay apart.
Bottom Row	- Continue to rotate the arms internally, moving the back of the hands together. - Sweep the fingers down and bring the back of the hands and wrists together as you bend the elbows. - Continue the rotation until the pinky side of the wrists are in contact with one another and hands have returned to chest height or slightly higher. Splay the hands apart while maintaining wrist contact. - Continue to rotate to restart the motion with the palm side of the wrists facing one another.
Repeat for 2-3 more repetition and then reverse the direction.	

Wrist Relief		
		
- With the hands below elbow height, flex at the wrists, gently pressing the back of the hands together. - Pull the wrists up towards the sternum, keeping the back of the hands fully connected. - To elicit a greater stretch, keep the back of the hands pressed together and gently pull the elbows down towards the ground. - Return to the start position to perform another repetition.		
Either perform repetitions or hold the wrist relief position for 30 seconds.		

ACTIVATIONS

STATIC BEAST ACTIVATIONS

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
STATIC BEAST	
 *Static Beast*	- Hands shoulder width, fingers forward. - Knees and feet hip width. - Hips in flexion, knees underneath umbilicus - Eyes down, neck long, mouth closed, jaw relaxed, tongue on the roof of the mouth. - Scapulae set at midpoint. - Arms externally rotated. - Spine neutral. - Ankles dorsiflexed; toes tucked. - Knees 1 inch/2-3 cm off floor.
LIMB LIFTS	
 *Single limb lift – foot*	- Set Static Beast - Maintaining perfect Beast alignment, lift the foot high enough to slide a piece of paper underneath. - Keep the ankle in dorsiflexion, toes in extension.
 *Single limb lift – hand*	- Set Static Beast - Maintaining perfect Beast alignment, lift the hand high enough to slide a piece of paper underneath. - Lift the hand from the scapula, keep the elbow straight, wrist in extension.
 *Contralateral limb lift*	- Set Static Beast - Maintaining perfect Beast alignment, lift opposing hand and foot simultaneously (as per the instructions above).

Progressions

1. 6-point contact (Crawl position)
2. 4-point contact (Static Beast)
3. 3-point contact (single limb lift – foot)
4. 3-point contact (single limb lift – hand)
5. 2-point contact (contralateral limb lift)

Common errors

In Static Beast:

- × Elbows bending
- × Feet and/or knees too wide or too narrow
- × Knees too far forward or too far back
- × Head hanging towards ground
- × Spine pulling into flexion
- × Anterior pelvic tilt
- × Shoulders elevated

In Limb Lifts:

- × Any of the above
- × Body shifting or rotating
- × Knees lifting or abducting sideways
- × Repositioning base limbs
- × Plantarflexing the ankle in limb lift

Test Out guidance / Notes

ACTIVATIONS

STATIC CRAB ACTIVATIONS

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
STATIC CRAB	
 *Static Crab*	- Hands shoulder width, arms externally rotated from shoulders, fingers pointing behind. - Place feet hip width roughly femur-length away from hips. - Hips position halfway between hands and feet. - Depress and retract scapulae, lifting hips 1 inch/2-3 cm off ground. - Slide head back in line with the spine, eyes lifted to 'the rising sun'
LIMB LIFTS	
 *Single limb lift – foot*	- Set Static Crab - Maintaining perfect Crab alignment, lift the foot high enough to slide a piece of paper underneath. - Keep the ankle in dorsiflexion.
 *Single limb lift – hand*	- Set Static Crab - Maintaining perfect Crab alignment, lift the hand high enough to slide a piece of paper underneath. - Lift by elevating the shoulder, keep the elbow extended, wrist in extension.
 *Contralateral limb lift*	- Set Static Crab - Maintaining perfect Crab alignment, lift opposing hand and foot simultaneously (as per the instructions above).

Progressions

1. 5-point contact (hands, feet, hips)
2. 4-point contact (Static Crab)
3. 3-point contact (single limb lift – foot)
4. 3-point contact (single limb lift – hand)
5. 2-point contact (contralateral limb lift)

Common errors

In Static Crab:

- × Elbows bending
- × Feet and/or knees too wide or too narrow
- × Hips not centered between hands and heels
- × Head ~~protracting~~ pulled forward
- × Eyes forward or down
- × Loss of neutral spine
- × Posterior pelvic tilt
- × Shoulders elevated

In Limb Lifts:

- × Any of the above
- × Body shifting or rotating
- × Hips lifting or dropping
- × Repositioning base limbs
- × Plantarflexing ankle or bending elbow in limb lift

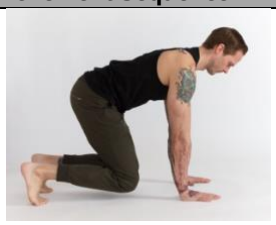
Test Out guidance / Notes

TRAVELING FORMS

FORWARD and REVERSE TRAVELING BEAST (FTB / RTB)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence



- Set Beast.

- Lift opposite hand and foot simultaneously – slightly bend elbow, keep ankle dorsiflexed.
- With knees 1 inch/2-3 cm above the ground, stride equal distance with the hand and foot.
- Traveling knee does not touch same side wrist.
- Hand and foot land at the same time.
- As hand lands, "Set" shoulder by corkscrewing arm and creating tension from hand to scapulae.
- As foot lands, drive heel backwards, creating tension from foot to hip.
- After each stride, one hand is in front of the shoulder line while the opposite is slightly behind. Similarly, one knee is in front of hip line and opposing knee is slightly behind.
- Maintain neutral neck throughout with eyes to the ground in front of the hands.

Common errors

- × Same side limbs move when traveling
- × Limbs lift and land at different times
- × Limbs travel unequal distances during stride
- × Knee touches or moves past same side wrist
- × Significant shift or rotation of shoulders or hips
- × Loss of neutral spine
- × Knees lifting more than 1 inch/2-3 cm, or touching the ground
- × Over-striding the leg in Reverse Traveling Beast
- × Striding with elbows in extension
- × Not stabilizing the base limbs after each stride

Test Out guidance

Extra Notes

Lift: opposing limbs at the same time
Stride: the same distance, at the same time
Land: limbs contact ground at same time
Set: corkscrew the arm and drive the heel

TRAVELING FORMS

LATERAL TRAVELING BEAST (LTB)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
	- From Static Beast, step feet wider than shoulder width and bring hands together directly under sternum. - Thumbs and fingers are adducted, thumbs of each hand touching the other.
	- Lift opposing limbs, lightly bending the elbow, and stride by moving towards the same side as the lifted hand. - Land the limbs at the same time and set tension to stabilize. - Hands will now be slightly wider than shoulder width and the knees and ankles will be touching, aligned with the middle of the body.
	- Stride again, lifting opposing limbs at the same time and landing them at the same time. - Land with thumbs touching and hands aligned with middle of body. Knees and feet will be slightly wider than shoulder width.

Common errors

- × Striding with same arm and same leg
- × Arms and legs striding different distances
- × Fingers and thumbs open
- × Hands and/or feet not touching when in horizontally adducted position
- × Not bending elbow to initiate stride
- × Fail to maintain neural spine throughout

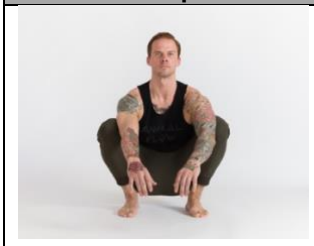
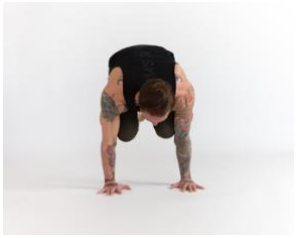
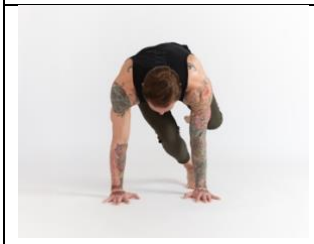
Test Out guidance

Extra notes

TRAVELING FORMS

LATERAL TRAVELING APE - VERSION 1: LOW HIP (LTA1)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
	- Set Deep Ape.
	- 'Push on the gas' to shift into the balls of the feet. - Place hands in Cross Body Contact; trail hand in line with lead foot. Hands are 1 hand length in front of the feet. - Hands land at the same time as one another, shoulder width apart.
	- Eyes look between the hands. - Shoulders shift forward, scapulae protract, elbows stay extended. - Drive down into the ground while simultaneously driving out of the legs.
	- Trail foot lands first, in line with lead hand. - Visually confirm the trail foot is in line with the lead hand.
	- Land the lead foot then push weight of the body back into the heels, lifting the hands. - Chest lifts, eyes focus on the horizon in between each repetition in Deep Ape.

Common errors

- × Heels lifted in Deep Ape
- × Reaching across the body prior to 'pushing on the gas'
- × Opposite hand and foot do not line up when in Cross Body Contact
- × Hands do not land simultaneously
- × Fail to keep elbows extended throughout each repetition
- × Hips lift high and/or legs kick out behind body
- × Feet land at the same time
- × Fails to lift chest and bring eyes to the horizon, finding new Deep Ape after each repetition

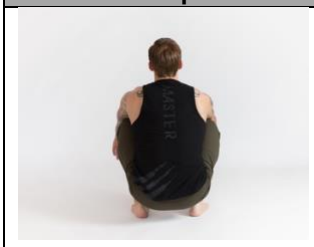
Test Out guidance

Extra notes

TRAVELING FORMS

LATERAL TRAVELING APE - VERSION 2: HIGH HIP (LTA2)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
	- Set Deep Ape.
	- 'Push on the gas' to shift into the balls of the feet - Place hands on the ground at the same time in Cross Body Contact, further than 1 hand length in front of lead foot. Hands are spaced shoulder width apart and elbows are extended.
	- Bodyweight shifts into hands scapulae elevate, elbows stay extended. - Drive down into ground with arms, simultaneously driving out of the legs, lifting hips until they stack over shoulders. - Head is neutral between arms, eyes look to the base of the palms.
	- Trail foot lands first, in line with lead hand, finding a (cross body) HHMB. - Base knee is extended, heel is high, lead leg is tucked tight to chest, heel to glute, ankle plantarflexed, toes pointed. - Shoulder gap is closed, eyes on base of palms.
	- Hips lower down by bending the landing leg. - Once hips are low, lead foot lands and hands push weight back into heels. - Chest lifts, eyes focus on the horizon in between each repetition in Deep Ape.

Transitional Position: High Hip Modified Beast (HHMB)

- ✓ Hands shoulder width, closing the gap
- ✓ Base knee extended, heel high
- ✓ Opposite knee tucked tight towards chest, heel to glute, toes pointed, ankle dorsiflexed

Common errors

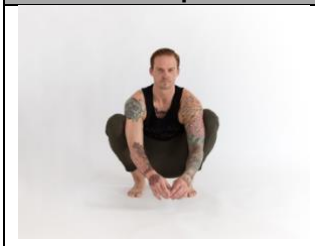
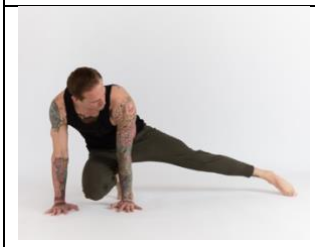
- × Heels lifted in Deep Ape
- × Reaching across the body prior to 'pushing on the gas'
- × Opposite hand and foot do not line up when in Cross Body Contact
- × Hands do not land simultaneously
- × Fail to keep elbows extended
- × Fail to lift hips above shoulders or close the shoulder gap
- × Fail to tuck knees to chest, heels to glutes or point toes
- × Feet land at the same time, or lead foot lands first
- × Fail to pass through Cross body HHMB

Test Out guidance / Notes

TRAVELING FORMS

LATERAL TRAVELING APE - VERSION 3: REACHING (LTA3)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
	- Set Deep Ape.
	- 'Push on the gas' to shift into the balls of the feet. - Place hands in Cross Body Contact, 1 hand length in front of feet.
	- Eyes look between the hands. - Shoulders shift forward, scapulae protract, elbows stay extended. - Drive down into the ground while simultaneously driving out of the legs. - Hips remain low.
	- Trail foot lands first, in line with lead hand. Trail hip sits onto same side heel. - Eyes look to lead foot as it reaches, knee fully extends. Toes and ball of the foot land.
	- Drive out of hands, dropping heels and simultaneously shifting hips laterally to land in a wider Deep Ape. - Chest lifts, eyes focus on the horizon during transition.
	- Weight continues to shift towards the direction of travel for the next stride. - Just before the trail knee extends, lift the heels and plant the hands into Cross Body Contact for next rep.

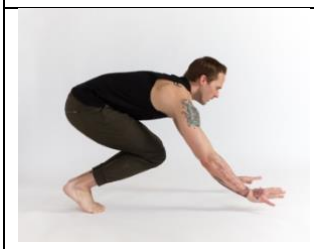
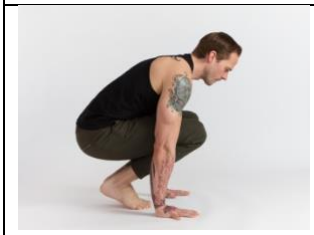
Common errors
× Heels lifted in Deep Ape × Reaching across the body prior to 'pushing on the gas' × Opposite hand and foot do not line up when in Cross Body Contact × Hands do not land simultaneously × Fail to keep elbows extended × Hips lift high and/or legs kick out behind body × Does not sit hip to heel to achieve full reach of the extended leg × Reestablishes Deep Ape between each repetition × Fails to lift chest and bring eyes to the horizon during the transition

Test Out guidance

Extra notes

TRAVELING FORMS
FORWARD TRAVELING APE (FTA)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
	- Begin in Modified Ape – knee, ankles, feet together, heels off of the ground, and hands in contact with the ground.
	- Spot the ground for where you want the hands to land (approx. 45-degree angle down to ground) - Elbows are flexed, palms forward.
	- Drive out of hips with arms outstretched and eyes forward.
	- Hips stay low throughout the dive, elbows stay straight, ankles plantarflex with pointed feet, scapulae protract. - As the hands make contact, bring eyes up and forward and translate shoulders in front of the wrist line, achieving Forward Shoulder Load.
	- Balls of the feet land lightly as the forward trajectory is decelerated. - Legs stay tucked and spine flexed throughout the movement.

Common errors

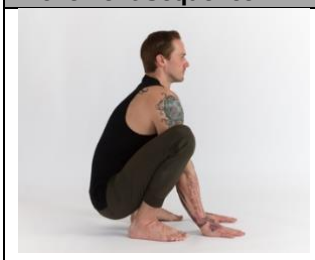
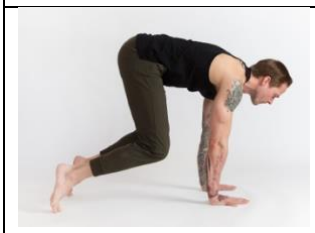
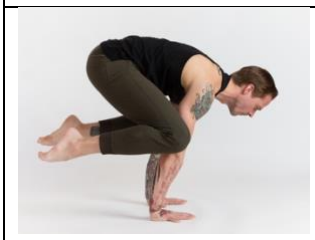
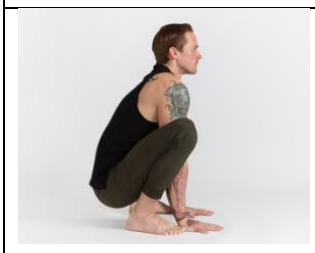
- × Beginning with knees or feet apart
- × Heels down at any point of the movement
- × Planting hands and pulling the legs through
- × Shoulders not passing the wrist line
- × Hips lifting high, stacking above shoulders
- × Legs extending from hips, pulling lumbar spine into extension
- × Not plantarflexing ankles and pointing feet
- × Landing with elbows flexed
- × Landing with fingers rotated outwards

Test Out guidance

Extra notes

TRAVELING FORMS
FORWARD TRAVELING FROG (FTF)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
	- From Deep Ape, place hands on the ground, inside the knees with elbows extended.
	- Flex the elbows to lift the hands, simultaneously lifting the heels and allowing the bodyweight to shift forward. - Eyes spot where the hands should land (approx. 45-degree angle, forward and down).
	- Dive forward from the legs allowing the shoulders to move in front of the wrists as the hands land. - Elbows are extended.
	- Once shoulders are in Forward Shoulder Load, decelerate the forward trajectory. - Hips stay low.
	- Lower the feet with control - Forefoot lands outside of the base of the hand.
	- Heels land and hands stay down. - Eyes return to the horizon.

Common errors

- × Fail to start with hands on ground
- × Fail to shift weight into the forefoot before traveling
- × 'Leap Frog' motion – jumping high off the ground
- × 'Plant and pull'
- × Extending legs out behind body
- × Lifting hands before feet land
- × Not plantarflexing ankles

Test Out guidance

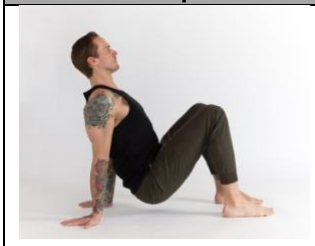
Extra notes

TRAVELING FORMS

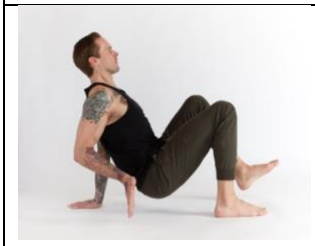
FORWARD and REVERSE TRAVELING CRAB (FTC / RTC)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence



- Set Crab.



- Bending the elbow to initiate, lift opposite hand and foot simultaneously.
- With hips 1 inch/2-3cm above ground, stride equal distance with the hand and foot.
- Hand and foot land at the same time.
- **FWD**: land heel to full foot, and fingers to full hand
- **REV**: land toes to full foot, and base of the palm to full hand.
- On "set", corkscrew arm and scapula into place and anchor base foot, generating stability for next stride.
- Maintain neutral neck throughout by focusing eyes up to the 'rising sun'.

Common errors

- × Lifts same side limbs during travel
- × Limbs lift and land at different times
- × Limbs stride unequal distances
- × Fail to bend the elbow to begin stride
- × Eyes on horizon
- × Shoulders protracted and/or elevated, posterior pelvic tilt, spine flexed
- × Hips lift more than 1 inch/2-3 cm above ground
- × Landing with incorrect hand or foot contact pattern

Test Out guidance

Extra notes

Lift: opposing limbs at the same time
Stride: the same distance, at the same time
Land: limbs contact ground at same time
Set: corkscrew the arm and anchor base foot

FORM SPECIFIC STRETCHES

LOADED BEAST (LB)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
	- Set Beast.
	- Push the hips back to meet the heels, knees flare open to accommodate the torso, staying 1 inch/2-3cm from the floor. - Walk or slide the hands forward at shoulder width until head is between arms, shoulders elevate to close the gap.

Common Errors

- × Stepping or jumping feet back from Beast
- × Hands wider than shoulder width
- × Knees fail to flare open
- × Knees lift too high
- × Not closing the shoulder gap
- × Allowing the lumbar spine to sink into extension
- × Head passes through the arm line

Test Out Guidance

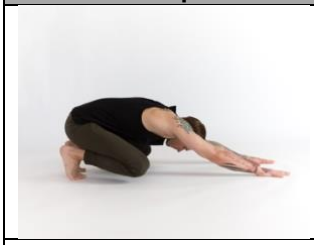
Points of Tension/Notes

1. Close the shoulder gap.
2. Brace the abdominals.
3. Horizontally abduct the hips.

FORM SPECIFIC STRETCHES

LOADED BEAST UNLOAD (LBU)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
	- Set Loaded Beast.
	- Initiate the movement by gripping the ground, pushing through the feet and pulling the shoulders forward. - Elbows stay extended, knees stay flexed and 1 inch/2-3 cm above the ground.
	- Shoulders stay protracted and travel in front of wrists, finding Forward Shoulder Load. - Pelvis tilts posteriorly. - Neck long, eyes to ground - Knees maintain flexed, low position. - Toes remain tucked.
	- Return to Loaded Beast by pressing the ground away and sending hips back to heels.

Common Errors

- × Moving forward with a flat/neutral spine/'planking'
- × Fail to keep elbows extended
- × Knees extending and/or lifting too high
- × Pelvis anteriorly tilting, lumbar spine sinking into extension
- × Eyes forward or head dropping towards ground

Test Out Guidance

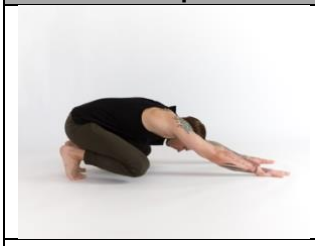
Points of Tension/Notes

1. Forearm extensors pulling shoulders further in front of wrists.
2. Serratus anterior/latissimus dorsi pulling scapulae into protraction.
3. Lower abdominals and glutes creating posterior pelvic tilt.

FORM SPECIFIC STRETCHES
WAVE UNLOAD (WU)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence

	- Set Loaded Beast.
	- Initiate the movement by lifting hips, reaching Peak Position – knees extended, heels high, long spine and head aligned with arms.
	- Simultaneously tuck chin and posteriorly tilt pelvis, initiating the Flexion Wave. - Shift weight into Forward Shoulder Load while maintaining Flexion Wave.
	- Once shoulders are in Forward Shoulder Load, hips begin to drop, starting the Extension Wave. - Keep elbows extended and toes tucked throughout.
	- Allow the wave to travel along the whole spine, finishing by lifting the chin from the chest to bring eyes to the sky. - Corkscrew the arms and drive the shoulders down away from ears.
	- Initiate the return by tucking the chin then protracting the shoulders. - The reverse Flexion Wave passes along the spine and lifts the hips to Peak Position before lowering into Loaded Beast.

Common Errors

- × Moving forward like Unload
- × Elbows flexing
- × Heels staying low
- × Failing to extend knees or keep them extended
- × Failing to sequence chin
- × Failing to tilt pelvis
- × Hips drop or lift too early
- × Shoulders not retracted/depressed
- × Eyes/head face forward
- × Not initiating reverse via chin tuck or finding Peak

Test Out Guidance

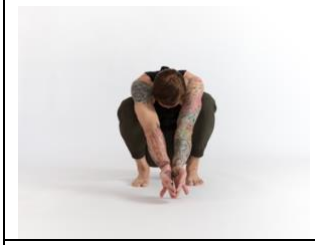
Points of Tension/Notes

1. Extensor chain throughout extension wave.
2. Flexor chain throughout flexion wave.

FORM SPECIFIC STRETCHES

APE REACH (AR)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
	- From Deep Ape, reach forward and down -arms internally rotated, backs of hands together, thumbs low to ground but not touching. - Spine flexed, chin tucked, legs adducting towards midline.
	- Initiate the Open Phase by shifting weight into the balls of the feet while simultaneously opening arms. - Heels lift until underneath pelvis, allowing knees to tilt forward and down. - Arms remain extended throughout, externally rotating and horizontally abducting from shoulders. - Hands drive out in opposing directions, palms facing directly up. - Knees pull open, hips horizontally abducting. - Pelvis lifts lightly from heels.
	- Return to Ape Reach by simultaneously shifting weight back into heels and closing arms. - Arms remain extended throughout.

Common Errors

In Reach Position
- × Heels lifted
- × Palms facing toward each other
- × Hands not close to ground
- × Fingers interlaced
- × Reaching forward from hips

In Open Position
- × Standing up out of squat
- × Arms above or below shoulder level
- × Shoulders shrugged
- × Elbows flexed
- × Palms not facing upwards

Test Out Guidance

Points of Tension/Notes

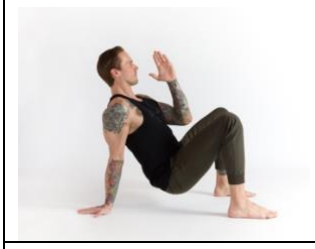
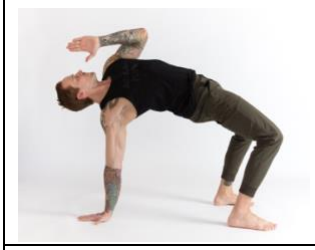
Reach Position
1. Hip adductors
2. Rectus abdominals
3. Internal rotators of shoulder
4. Upper trapezius

Open Position
1. Glute Medius
2. Erectors of spine
3. Serratus anterior
4. External rotators of shoulder

FORM SPECIFIC STRETCHES

CRAB REACH (CR)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
	- Set Crab, with the feet placed shoulder width apart or slightly wider.
	- Lift the hand of the Call Out arm and position it central to, and 6-8 inches/15-20 cm away from the face.
	- Initiate the movement by corkscrewing the base arm and extending the hips, finding 3-Point Bridge - Hips are extended, feet planted, neck neutral with eyes looking directly up and through the hand.
	- Rotate the head to find the base hand with the eyes. Simultaneously reach the Call Out arm to frame the head at 90 degrees, fingers reaching to the ground to pull biceps towards back of head. - Shoulders stack one above the other, over base wrist.
	- Initiate return movement by rotating the head and returning the Call Out arm to 3-point bridge. - Begin to lower the hips with control.
	- Once hips have returned to 1" or 2-3cm from the ground and halfway between the heel and the hand, place the Call Out hand back on the ground, returning to Crab.

Common Errors

- × Hand of Call Out arm too close to body
- × Fail to find 3-Point Bridge (or moves past it) before reaching over
- × Heels lift and/or feet rotate out
- × Base hand requires adjustment
- × Base elbow flexes
- × Shoulders are not stacked
- × Call Out arm fails to maintain 90-degree bend at elbow, arm falls forward/covers face
- × Eyes/head do not look at base hand in Reach Position
- × Fails to sequence head properly to initiate Return to Crab

Test Out Guidance

Points of Tension/Notes

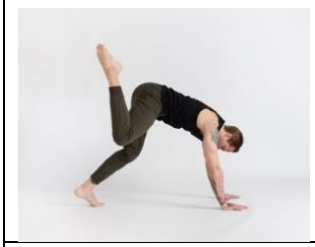
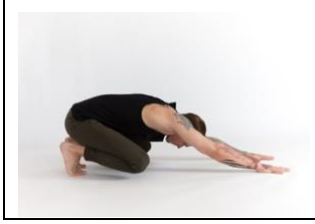
1. Glutes engage to create hip extension.
2. Drive the ground away through the base hand, engaging lats/serratus and external rotators (creating a bubble of space in the base shoulder).
3. Fingertips of Call Out arm reach towards the ground.

FORM SPECIFIC STRETCHES

SCORPION REACH (SR)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence

	- Set Loaded Beast.
	- Pull the body forward with arms extended, shoulders protracted. - Neck is long, eyes to the floor. - Press knee of traveling leg against opposite wrist, low to the ground. - Ankle is plantarflexed and foot pointed in the direction of the circle.
	- Circle the traveling leg diagonally out and up. - Head drops between extended arms, closing the shoulder gap and bringing gaze to base foot.
	- Call Out leg maintains 90-degrees at the knee, shin pulls upward towards sky. - Spine is extended, rotated and laterally flexed. - Base heel is high and outwardly rotated, knee lightly flexed.
	- Initiate the Return to Loaded Beast by circling the knee diagonally until it makes contact again with the opposite wrist. - Eyes to the ground and shoulders in protraction.
	- Press hips back to Loaded Beast.

Common Errors

- × Beginning like Wave Unload or in Static Beast
- × Fail to reach opposite wrist
- × Fail to take Call Out leg through a circular pattern
- × Head lifts up or tucks down
- × Limited rotation of hips/Call Out leg
- × Rotation of shoulders/torso
- × Base heel remains down or low
- × Base knee extends
- × Fail to reverse the sequence on Return to Loaded Beast

Test Out Guidance

Points of Tension/Notes

1. Close the shoulder gap
2. Closing the space between ribs and hip on the same side as the base leg
3. Glutes engage to pull shin of Call Out leg towards sky

FORM SPECIFIC STRETCHES

BEAST REACH (BR)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
	- Set Loaded Beast.
	- Initiate the movement by lifting hips and carrying the traveling leg up to Peak Position with a long spine. - Call Out leg tucks tight into the body with knee to chest, heel to glute, ankle plantarflexed. - Base knee is extended, base heel high, neutral head.
	- Tuck chin and tilt pelvis to create flexion wave tension then initiate motion forward. - Shoulders pass wrist line into Forward Shoulder Load - Knee travels past same side arm, setting at or just below elbow. - Base leg remains extended. - Chin untucks once knee reaches elbow and eyes focus on the horizon. - Hip of base leg is extended.
	- Initiate the Return to Loaded Beast by tucking the chin then protracting shoulders further. Flexion wave lifts the hips back up. - Release chin and lengthen spine in Peak position.
	- Keeping Call Out leg tucked, bend the base leg to bring the pelvis down to Loaded Beast.

Common Errors

- × Moving forward like Unload
- × Not keeping the Call Out leg tucked and flexed
- × Fail to tuck chin and posteriorly tilt pelvis to initiate Flexion Wave
- × Failing to extend the base knee
- × Knee fails to reach/pass the same side elbow
- × Knee drops towards wrist
- × Spine drops into extension, hips lower
- × Shoulders sink into retraction
- × Head sinks towards ground
- × Eyes looking down Not initiating reverse via chin tuck
- × Missing Peak position

Test Out Guidance

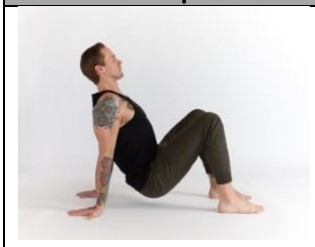
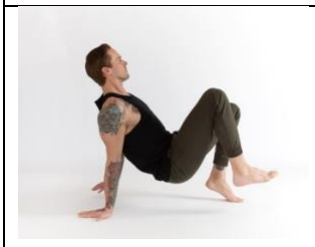
Points of Tension/Notes

1. Engage adductor complex, driving Call Out leg into same side elbow.
2. Serratus anterior/latissimus dorsi pulling scapulae into protraction.
3. Forearm extensors pulling shoulders further in front of wrists.
4. Gluteal contraction of base leg.

SWITCHES & TRANSITIONS

UNDERSWITCH (US) – Crab to Beast

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence – from Crab to Beast	
	- Set Crab* *US from Crab first, progress to US from Beast.
	- Lift the traveling foot and opposite hand, performing a contralateral limb lift.
	- Drive the base foot into the ground to 'push on the gas' and lift the heel.
	- Bend the elbow and bring limbs towards the midline, streamlining the rotation. - Turn towards the Call Out leg as it travels UNDER the body. - Knee travels close to the ground towards Beast.
	- Once the base arm comes into view, drop the traveling foot and hand at the same time. - Hands are shoulder width and perfect Beast alignment is achieved.

Common errors

- × Opposing limbs lifting or landing at different times
- × Fail to 'push on the gas' before rotating
- × Call Out leg and opposite hand incorrectly positioned, fail to streamline rotation
- × Pelvis/knees too high during rotation
- × Using a rotary arm
- × Loss of form in Crab or Beast
- × 'Overswitching'

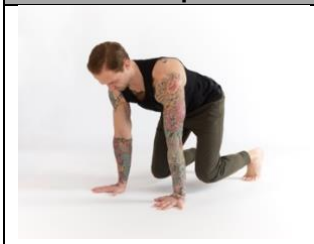
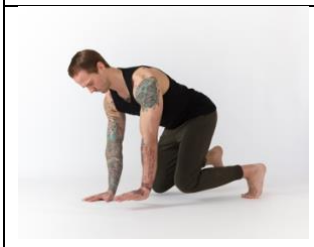
Test Out guidance

Notes

SWITCHES & TRANSITIONS

UNDERSWITCH (US) – Beast to Crab

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence – from Beast to Crab	
	- Set Beast* *US from Crab first, progress to US from Beast.
	- Lift the traveling foot and opposite hand, performing a contralateral limb lift.
	- Bring limbs towards the midline, streamlining the rotation. - Turn towards the Call Out leg as it travels UNDER the body, ankle plantarflexed. - Pelvis travels close to the ground towards Crab.
	- Once the rotation has been completed, drop the base heel to stop rotating.
	- Traveling limbs land at the same time, finding perfect Crab position.

Common errors

- × Opposing limbs lifting or landing at different times
- × Fail to drop the heel to stop rotating or dropping it too soon before rotating is completed
- × Call Out leg and opposite hand incorrectly positioned, fail to streamline rotation or hold arm in a Crab Reach position
- × Pelvis/knees too high during rotation
- × Loss of form in Crab or Beast
- × 'Overswitching'

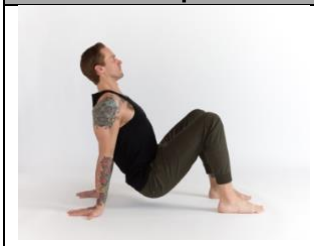
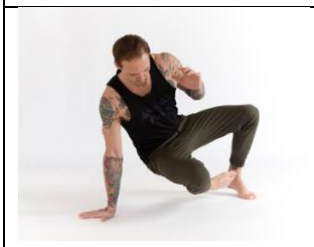
Test Out guidance

Notes

SWITCHES & TRANSITIONS

UNDERSWITCH TAP (USTap)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence – from Crab to Beast	
	- Set Crab* *USTap from Crab first, progress to USTap from Beast.
	- From Beast: Limbs Lift as per US criteria. - From Crab: Limbs lift, heel as per US criteria. - Initiate movement with acceleration. - Control speed of rotation throughout.
	- Shoulders, hips, and knees square up with ground. - Traveling limbs 'tap' the ground simultaneously with approximately 10% of body load. - Elbow is extended and ball of the foot makes contact with ground during the Tap.
	- Traveling limbs re-lift from the ground simultaneously as well as heel (when applicable). - Accelerate into an US, redirecting the energy back along the same path.
	- Decelerate just in time to gently transition back to base position, landing the heel (when in Crab) then the traveling limbs simultaneously. - Land lightly and with control.

Common errors

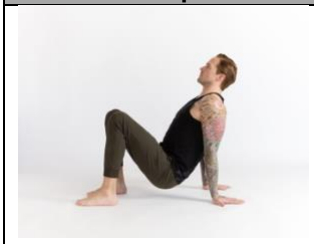
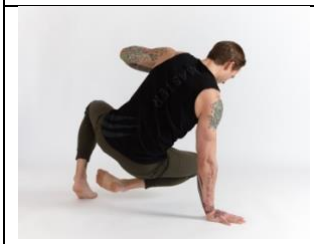
- × Opposing limbs lifting or landing at different times
- × Fail to utilize correct Underswitch technique
- × No discernable acceleration/deceleration
- × Re-distributing weight through all limbs/tapping with too much weight
- × Fail to tap the ground with both limbs fully
- × Fail to keep elbows extended on base arm or during the tap

Test Out guidance

Notes

SWITCHES & TRANSITIONS
JUMPING UNDERSWITCH (JUS)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
	- Set Crab
	- Lift the traveling foot and opposite hand. - Throw the arm across the body and drive off the base leg, jumping into rotation.
	- Rotate towards the Call Out leg, pulling the leg under the body and switching feet in the air.
	- Land in Modified Beast with a neutral foot alignment (towards same side wrist), knees 1" from the ground, and a neutral spine. - The ankle that is lifted is in plantarflexion, toes pointed.
	- Transition through the Movement Window fluidly, completing the rotation as per Underswitch criteria.
	- Finish in perfect Crab position.

Common errors

- × Performing a regular Underswitch and then hopping to switch feet
- × 'Pushing on the gas' before jumping
- × Landing on the wrong foot after the jump
- × Fail to land in neutral foot and/or landing rotated past Modified Beast
- × Jumping out of Crab with too much height
- × Knees too high in Modified Beast or spine flexed
- × Losing control/moving too fast

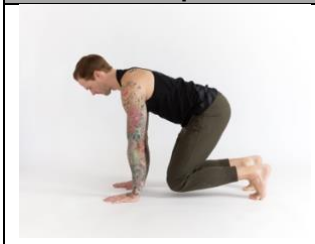
Test Out guidance

- Be sure to submit the full Jumping Underswitch in your Test Out, NOT the regression.

Notes

SWITCHES & TRANSITIONS
SIDE KICKTHROUGH (SKT)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
	- Set Beast.
	- Lift the traveling foot and opposite hand simultaneously. - Begin to rotate as if performing an Underswitch. - Bring eyes down to base foot.
	- Watch the base heel drop once foot has lined up at 90-degrees relative to base hand. - Hips are positioned halfway between base hand and base foot.
	- Kick the Call Out leg directly forward, extending the knee, externally rotating from the hip, ankle plantarflexed and toes pointed. - No part of the leg from foot to hip touches the ground. - Base arm is extended, shoulder protracted. - Peel opposite elbow back until it is above the same side shoulder, back of hand facing same side cheek.

Common errors

- × Fail to drop heel at 90-degrees or to check with eyes
- × Fail to extend knee fully or externally rotate Call Out leg
- × Fail to plantarflex ankle and/or point toes of Call Out leg
- × Hips not centered between base foot and base hand
- × Fail to position elbow or hand correctly
- × Does not lift the base heel when moving back to Beast via Underswitch

Test Out guidance

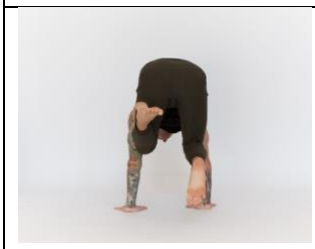
Notes

- Perform an Underswitch to get back to Beast

SWITCHES & TRANSITIONS

JUMPING SIDE KICKTHROUGH (J-SKT)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
	- From Beast, perform a Side Kickthrough.
	- Jump off the base foot into rotation. - Retract the kicking leg powerfully under the body, simultaneously bringing the traveling hand down to meet the ground.
	- Glance under body as feet switch, landing in Modified Beast with a neutral foot alignment, knees 1" from ground, and a neutral spine position.
	- Lift the new traveling hand. - Continue to transition through the Movement Window fluidly, watching the heel drop at 90-degrees.
	- Finish in a perfect Side Kickthrough.

Common errors

- × Beginning in Beast and jumping into a Side Kickthrough
- × Initiating the movement with a partial Underswitch before proceeding to the jump
- × Jumping too high; hips rising above shoulders
- × Fail to land in neutral foot / landing on an already rotated foot
- × Fail to achieve a neutral Modified Beast position
- × Finishes in a technically incorrect Side Kickthrough

Test Out guidance

Notes

SWITCHES & TRANSITIONS

LEVITATING SIDE KICKTHROUGH (L-SKT)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
	- From Beast, perform a Side Kickthrough.
	- Jump off the base foot into rotation, pulling the kicking leg underneath the body and simultaneously bringing the traveling hand down to the ground.
	- Lift the hips above shoulders as heels and knees are pulled tight into the body in Tuck Balance position. - Shoulders are elevated, head in line with arms and eyes to base of palms.
	- Bring the original kicking leg down to meet the ground in High Hip Modified Beast (HHMB). - Hips high, knee tucked towards chest, heel to glute. - Base leg fully extended, heel high off the ground. - Head between arms, eyes looking at the base of palms.
	
	- Bend the base knee, lowering the body down. - Continue fluidly into the rotation and finish in a perfect Side Kickthrough.

Common errors

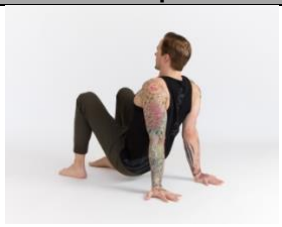
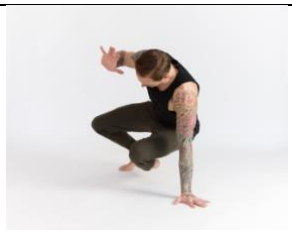
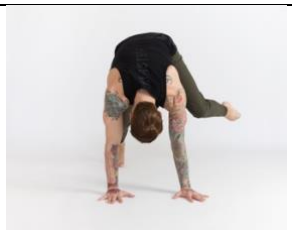
- × Begins in Beast and jumps into a Side Kickthrough
- × Initiating the movement with an Underswitch before levitating
- × Hips fail to move above the shoulders
- × Legs 'donkey kick', tuck position is 'loose'
- × Elbows fail to stay extended
- × Hands are wider than shoulder width
- × Lands on an already rotated base foot
- × Misses HHMB
- × Starts to kick the leg through without lowering the body from HHMB

Test Out guidance

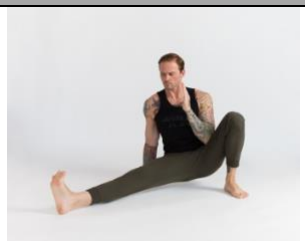
Notes

SWITCHES & TRANSITIONS
FULL SCORPION (FS)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
	- Set Crab
	- Initiate movement as if performing a regular Underswitch with limbs streamlining the rotation. - Traveling ankle plantarflexes.
	- Hand lands shoulder width apart; begin to press hips up as head drops between arms and leg draws the circle. - Call Out leg internally rotates to draw the circle out and up to Peak position.
	- Call Out leg finds Peak position as per Scorpion Reach criteria. - Base heel is high and knee is lightly bent. Eyes to base leg. - Elbows extended, closed shoulder gap position.
	- To begin the Switch, base knee extends, ankle dorsiflexes as weight transfers to side of base foot. - Arms counterbalance the rotation, continuing to reach for ground as foot descends. - Hand peels off as foot drops further and eyes remain on base leg.
	- Land lightly in Modified Crab (see box at right).

End Position: Modified Crab



- ✓ Hips halfway between base hand and base foot.
- ✓ Straight leg is extended at knee, ankle dorsiflexed
- ✓ Arm in Guarded Position, eyes to the horizon

Common errors

- × Fail to begin in Crab
- × Incorrect Underswitch component
- × Incorrect Peak position component
- × Fail to extend base knee or dorsiflex the base ankle to initiate switch
- × Bends base knee during Switch or landing
- × Releases hand from ground too early
- × Eyes spot the hands
- × Incorrect Modified Crab position (see box above)

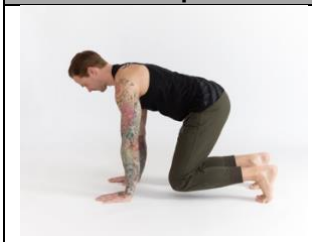
Test Out guidance / Notes

SWITCHES & TRANSITIONS

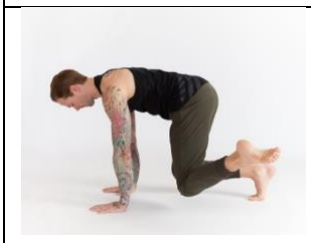
SCORPION SWITCH (SS)

Call Out	
Intent	

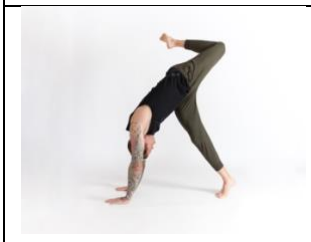
Movement Sequence



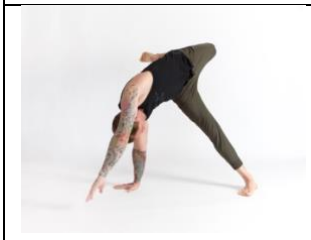
- Set Beast.



- Initiate movement by lifting traveling foot, ankle plantarflexes, toes point, slight internal rotation from hip.



- Foot of Call Out leg travels out and up, tracking a circular path.
- Call Out leg finds Peak position as per Full Scorpion.



- Call Out leg completes the Switch as per Full Scorpion.

- Land lightly in Modified Crab as per Full Scorpion (see box at right).

End Position: Modified Crab

- ✓ Hips halfway between base hand and base foot
- ✓ Straight leg is extended at knee, ankle dorsiflexed
- ✓ Arm in Guarded Position, eyes to the horizon

Common errors

- × Loading knee to opposite wrist
- × Incorrect Peak position (see Full Scorpion)
- × Incorrect Switch (see Full Scorpion)
- × Incorrect landing (see Full Scorpion)
- × Overswitching from Modified Crab to get back to Beast

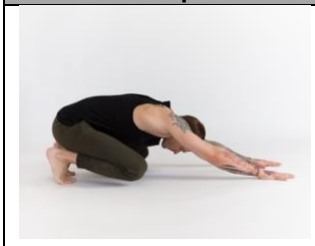
Test Out guidance / Notes

SWITCHES & TRANSITIONS

FRONT STEP (FStep)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence



- Set Loaded Beast.

- Drive out of Loaded Beast, simultaneously replacing the same side hand with the traveling foot.
- Foot lands outside and slightly in front of where hand was, toes pointing forward.
- Heel of the traveling foot should align with the palm of the base hand.

- Lifted arm pulls into Attack Hand position- palm forward, elbow pulling directly backwards.
- Chest and head lift to bring eyes to the horizon.
- Base knee flexed
- Base arm remains extended, fingers pointing forward.

- Initiate the Return to Loaded Beast by simultaneously replacing foot with the hand, landing hand shoulder width.
- Drive through arms to push the body back in space.

- Continue to push hips back to find perfect Loaded Beast.

Common errors

- × Call Out leg steps into position before lifting same side hand
- × Call Out leg steps too narrow, foot rotates outwards or otherwise deviates from neutral
- × Base leg fully extends
- × Arm is in a Side Kickthrough position or otherwise deviates from Attack Hand position
- × Hand is placed on ground before moving the foot to return to LB

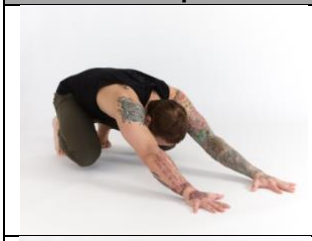
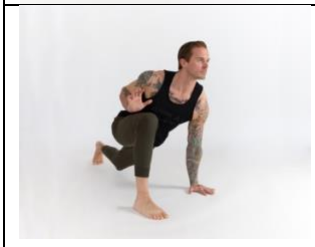
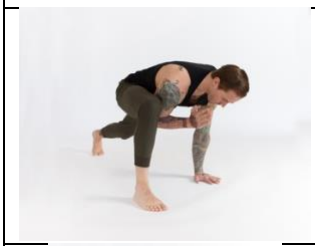
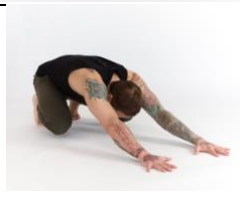
Test Out guidance

Notes

SWITCHES & TRANSITIONS

FRONT STEP THROUGH (FST)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
	- Set Loaded Beast.
	- Perform a Front Step.
	- Transition arm to Guarded Position. - Drive base hand and foot into the ground to reduce load on the back leg and start to transition it through the movement window.
	- Leg passes through the window, ankle plantarflexed, knee fully extended and leg externally rotated from the hip. - The Kickthrough leg, base hand and base foot all point forward. - Arm in Guarded Position.
	- Reverse the motion by passing the Kickthrough leg back through the movement window. - Reverse as per Front Step, replacing foot with hand simultaneously.
	- Continue to push hips back to find perfect Loaded Beast.

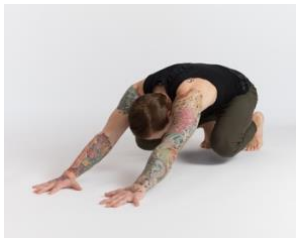
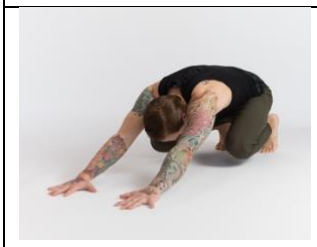
Common errors
× Any errors from Front Step × Base foot rotates outwardly or heel lifts as rear leg transitions through × Arm does not transition to Guarded Position × Leg not kicking directly forward, fully extended, externally rotated and/or with foot pointed × Any part of the Kickthrough leg touches the ground × Kickthrough leg is too high × Arm does not transition directly to ground from Guarded Position on Return to Loaded Beast

Test Out guidance

Notes

SWITCHES & TRANSITIONS
FRONT KICKTHROUGH (FKT)

Call Out	
Intent	

Movement Sequence	
	- Set Loaded Beast.
	- Jump out of Loaded Beast, lifting the hand so the same side foot (base foot) can land with the Call Out leg held close to midline. - Foot lands wider than, and in front of, where the hand was originally positioned.
	- Call Out leg transitions through the Movement Window. - Leg kicks directly forward, is externally rotated, ankle plantarflexed, toes pointed. - Kickthrough leg is low without touching the ground. - Base foot stays anchored to ground, toes facing directly forward. - Lifted arm finds Guarded Position, torso slightly flexed, base arm extended.
	- Pop back to Loaded Beast by retracting the Kickthrough leg while simultaneously driving the Guarded Position hand back to the ground. - Push the entire body back to Loaded Beast.

Common errors

- × Stepping forward from Loaded Beast
- × Movement Window too narrow: base foot rotates outwardly or heel lifts
- × Call Out leg kicks off-center
- × Call Out leg not extended at knee, ankle not plantarflexed, toes not pointed
- × Call Out leg rests on the ground or is lifted high
- × Arm in SKT position
- × Spine in extension in final kickthrough position

Test Out guidance

Notes

CHAPTER 4

LANGUAGE & FLOWS

ANIMAL FLOW LANGUAGE

One of the most important parts of teaching Animal Flow is how well you communicate it to your clients and/or others you are practicing with. The "Animal Flow Language" uses specific terms and syntax that are the same throughout the world. Understanding this language helps ensure that your Call Outs are consistent and can be followed by any Flowist.

When Calling Out a Flow, you'll select the movements and direct your students through the Flow using our specific Animal Flow language. Think of the Animal Flow language like a road map that clearly identifies the series of directions someone should follow to reach a destination. With Animal Flow now being offered in well over 42 countries, this language is used by Flowists across the globe to clearly and consistently communicate with our clients, our students, and each other.

Below are some important rules regarding the terms and syntax for Call Outs.

SET BASE POSITION

The first part of any Flow is to establish the start position of the Flowist. This base position will always be one of the following four base positions: Crab, Beast, Ape, Loaded Beast. The cue to get into the position is "Set."

Base Position Options	**Call Out**
Deep Ape	"Set Ape" or "Set Deep Ape"
Static Beast	"Set Beast" or "Set Static Beast"
Static Crab	"Set Crab" or "Set Static Crab"
Loaded Beast	"Set Loaded Beast"

CALL OUT FORMULA (GENERAL): DIRECTION > LIMB > COMMAND

One of the most important parts of the Animal Flow language is our Call Out formula. This formula informs the way we verbally instruct the movement that is to be performed.

1. DIRECTION: Left or right
2. LIMB: Arm or leg (never 'hand' or 'foot'!)
3. COMMAND: The name of the actual movement.

For example, when performing a Side Kickthrough with our left leg, the call out would be: "Left" (direction) "leg" (limb) "Side Kickthrough" (command).

No matter where you go in the world, the Call Out formula is communicated the same way.

DIRECTION > LIMB > COMMAND

DIRECTION and LIMB instructions are communicated in the preferred language of the speaker, but the COMMAND is always spoken in English.

CALLING OUT THE ACTION IN SIDE KICKTHROUGH

In Level 1, there are TWO exceptions to the DIRECTION > LIMB > COMMAND order: Jumping Side Kickthrough and Levitating Side Kickthrough.

In these variations, you need to first call out the ACTION they are about to perform, followed by the rest of the Call Out so that our new formula becomes:

ACTION > DIRECTION > LIMB > COMMAND

For example:

"JUMP to Left Leg Side Kickthrough" or "LEVITATE to Right Leg Side Kickthrough"

Why is this the case? In both instances, the actual Side Kickthrough itself doesn't change; the only thing that changes is how we *transition* into the movement.

*Remember: We never Jump or Levitate to a Side Kickthrough from a Static Beast, Loaded Beast or Static Crab. In order to call out a Jump or Levitation, we have to first be in one of our acceptable straight leg positions like Side Kickthrough, Front Kickthrough or Modified Crab.

CHANGING BASE POSITIONS: SET

When changing from one base position to another, we would use the word SET, just as when we establish the starting or base position for a flow.

We can use SET:

1. To begin a flow in one of the four possible base positions: Beast, Crab, Ape, and Loaded Beast.
2. To move from a base position when an S&T is not available. For example, we'd use an Underswitch to move between Beast and Crab, not a "Set" command.
3. To SET a base position when the movement did not just come directly from there within the flow.
4. To cue the flowist to retract an extended leg (Modified Crab, SKT, FKT) to Set Crab and continue into a Crab Reach.

What can we SET?

If this is your Base Position...	And want to change to...	You'd do it this way...	And you'd say...
Deep Ape	Static Beast	SET	"Set Beast" or "Set Static Beast"
	Loaded Beast	SET	"Set Loaded Beast"
	Static Crab	SET	"Set Crab" or "Set Static Crab"
Static Beast	Loaded Beast	SET	"Set Loaded Beast"
	Deep Ape	SET	"Set Ape" or "Set Deep Ape"
	Static Crab	Underswitch	"Right/Left leg Underswitch"
Loaded Beast	Static Beast	SET	"Set Beast" or "Set Static Beast"
	Deep Ape	SET or Pop To	"Set Ape/Deep Ape" or "Pop to Ape"
	Static Crab	Underswitch	"Right/Left leg Underswitch"
Static Crab	Deep Ape	SET	"Set Ape" or "Set Deep Ape"

	Static Beast	Underswitch	"Right/Left leg Underswitch"
	Loaded Beast	Underswitch	"Right/Left leg Underswitch TO Loaded Beast"

There are, however, some caveats to using the SET command:

1. We would never use the word SET when changing from a Crab to Beast or Crab to Loaded Beast. Instead, we'd use an Underswitch since it's a more fluid option.
2. We would never SET a Modified Crab since a Full Scorpion or Scorpion Switch is, again, a more fluid option for getting into a Modified Crab.

RETURNING TO ORIGINAL POSITION: RETURN TO

The call out "Return to" instructs Flowists to return on the known path to a position that the movement typically originates from. Here are the ways we use it.

1. Using "Return To" with Form Specific Stretches

The "Return To" command is used primarily with FSS. Any time we have someone in the Reach Position of a FSS, they must stay there until we tell them to "Return to" the place the movement originated from.

For example:

"Right Arm Crab Reach - Return to Crab"

"Wave Unload - Return to Loaded Beast"

This gets slightly more confusing when performing an Ape Reach since there is seemingly an extra step. Here is the correct way you would call out an Ape Reach:

"Set Deep Ape" - first we have to instruct the Flowist to find Deep Ape

"Ape Reach" – this is the actual reach, thumbs down towards the ground

"Open" – shift into the balls of the feet, open the arms, palms towards the sky

"Return to Ape Reach"* – return to the reaching position

*Once in Open position, it would also be acceptable for us to call out "Set Deep Ape," which would mean that it's unnecessary to return to the Reach Position, but instead, simply drop the heels, finishing in Deep Ape.

2. **Using "Return To" or "Pop Back" in the Front Kickthrough category**

In addition to using the Return To command with FSSs, you would also use this command during a Front Step or Front Step Through.

For example:

"Left Leg Front Step - Return to Loaded Beast"

"Right Leg Front Step Through - Return to Loaded Beast"

To match the explosive nature of the Front Kickthrough move, we use the phrase "Pop back to Loaded Beast". The "pop" in this scenario, means that you want them to jump back to the Loaded Beast position, versus just stepping back.

"Pop back to Loaded Beast"

However, in order to further expand the possible ways that we can combine these actions, we *can* also mix and match the pairings of Front Step Through and Front Kickthrough with either "Return to", or "Pop back to", Loaded Beast.

COMBINING AND MODIFYING MOVEMENTS: TO or INTO

The correct use of "to" and/or "into" can be one of the more confusing components to master from the entire Call Out language. In Animal Flow, we use the terms "to" and "into" interchangeably - there is no difference to the meaning for which one you choose to use.

The TWO scenarios where TO or INTO should be used:

1. **When we are ending somewhere other than where we would normally end a movement**. For example, we know that a regular Underswitch would always transition us from Static Beast to Static Crab or vice versa. If we want to get from Crab to loaded beast, we can use INTO or TO to let the flowist know there is a change to specify ending an Underswitch in Loaded Beast rather than Beast.

   For example:

   "Set Crab, Right leg Underswitch to Loaded Beast"

   "Left leg Jumping Underswitch INTO right leg Side Kickthrough"

2. **When we are eliminating something to create a more fluid transfer between two movements**. In the examples below, we are eliminating the hand drop going from a Crab Reach to an Underswitch and from a Modified Crab to a Crab Reach.

For Example:

"Right arm Crab Reach, Return to Crab INTO left leg Underswitch

"Right leg Full Scorpion, Set Crab INTO Right Arm Crab Reach"

When NOT to use TO or INTO

You should never call out TO or INTO after a regular movement. It's common for new Animal Flow instructors to use these words when they're not necessary.

The following example is INCORRECT:

> *"Set Crab, Left Leg Underswitch TO Right Leg Underswitch INTO Right Leg Underswitch Tap TO Left Leg Full Scorpion" (incorrect)*

None of these movements need a TO or INTO between them, as they are all stand-alone movements. The correct way to call this out would be simply:

> *"Set Crab, Left leg Underswitch, Right leg Underswitch, Right leg Underswitch Tap, Left leg Full Scorpion" (correct)*

POP BACK TO & SLIDE TO

The Call Out "Pop Back to Loaded Beast" is one used from a Front Kickthrough or Front Step Through position to indicate an explosive jump backwards to land in Loaded Beast. There are a couple of other instances in which we can use Pop Back to.

Slide to is used from a Loaded Beast position. As the name suggests, it allows a flowist to slide forward on one foot from Loaded Beast to Modified Beast, ultimately creating a movement window. Both Pop Back To and Slide To can serve as transitions to pass through Modified Beast transfer as outlined below.

When you can use Pop Back To:

1. From a Front Kickthrough, Front Step Through, Side Kickthrough or Modified Crab position to get to Loaded Beast.
2. From a Front Kickthrough, Front Step Through, Side Kickthrough or Modified Crab position to pass through Modified Beast then transition:

a. Under the movement window as in an Underswitch

b. Over the movement window as in a Scorpion Switch

When you can use Slide To:

1. From a Loaded Beast position to indicate sliding on one foot forward to a Modified Beast then transition:

    a. Under the movement window as in a Side Kickthrough or Underswitch

    b. Over the movement window as in a Scorpion Switch

FLOWS

In Animal Flow, the Flow component is where the magic happens. It's the ultimate integration of the benefits and objectives of the S&T and FSS components,

Over the following pages, we've shared some sample flows as well as a go-to resource that you can use to map and explore the endless movement combinations that are possible in Animal Flow.

For the first two Flows – the Beast Flow and the Form Specific Stretch Flow, we've included the full Call Out in the column on the left and the abbreviated written Flow in the column on the right. For the remaining sample Flows, we've left the written Flow column blank so that you can practice the skill of writing out Flows according to the abbreviation key covered at the end of this chapter.

THE BEAST FLOW	
Call Out	**Written Flow**
Set Crab Right leg Underswitch Tap Left leg Jumping Underswitch TO Right leg Side Kickthrough Levitate to left leg Side Kickthrough Left leg Full Scorpion Right leg Jumping Underswitch TO Right arm Crab Reach Return to Crab INTO Left leg Underswitch to Loaded Beast Unload Return to Loaded Beast Right leg Front Step Through Return to Loaded Beast Right leg Front Kickthrough Pop back to Loaded Beast Right leg Underswitch Repeat, starting with a left leg Underswitch Tap from the base position of Crab.	Crab, R L USTap, L L J-US – R L SKT, L L L-SKT, L L FS, R L J-US – R A CR – Crab – L L US – LB, LBU – LB, R L FST – LB, R L FKT – LB, R L US

THE FORM SPECIFIC STRETCH FLOW	
Call Out	**Written Flow**
Set Loaded Beast Loaded Beast – Unload (x2) - *Call Out: Unload, return to Loaded Beast (x2)* Wave Unload (x2) - *Call Out: Wave Unload, return to Loaded Beast (x2)* Set Deep Ape Ape Reach (x2) - *Call Out: Reach, Open, return to Ape Reach (x2)* Set Static Crab Crab Reach (x2) - *Call Out: Right arm Crab Reach, return to Crab, left arm Crab Reach, return to Crab* Underswitch to Loaded Beast - *Call Out: Right (or Left) leg Underswitch to Loaded Beast* Scorpion Reach (x2) - *Call Out: Left leg Scorpion Reach, return to Loaded Beast, right leg Scorpion Reach, return to Loaded Beast* Beast Reach (x2) - *Call Out: Left leg Beast Reach, return to Loaded Beast, right leg Beast Reach, return to Loaded Beast*	LB, LBU – LB, LBU – LB, WU – LB, WU – LB, Ape, AR, Open – AR, Open – AR, Crab, R A CR – Crab, L A CR – Crab, R (or L) L US – LB, L L SR – LB, R L SR – LB, L L BR – LB, R L BR – LB

BASE CHARTS

Over the following charts, we've mapped out where you can move to from any of your Base Positions.

BASE POSITION: DEEP APE		
	SET	Beast Crab Loaded Beast
	S&T	-
	FSS	Ape Reach
	TO/INTO	-
	SLIDE TO	-

BASE POSITION: BEAST		
	SET	Loaded Beast Deep Ape
	S&T	Underswitch Underswitch Tap Side Kickthrough Scorpion Switch
	FSS	Scorpion Reach* - Continue the switch - Return to Beast - Underswitch - Underswitch to Side Kickthrough
	TO/INTO	Underswitch Tap to Full Scorpion Underswitch Tap to Scorpion Reach Underswitch to Crab Reach
	SLIDE TO	-

**When performing a Scorpion Reach from a Base Position of Beast, remember that we don't load the Call Out leg/press the knee of the Call Out leg to the opposite wrist!*

BASE POSITION: CRAB		
	SET	Deep Ape
	S&T	Underswitch Underswitch Tap Jumping Underswitch Full Scorpion Levitating Underswitch
	FSS	Crab Reach
	TO/INTO	Underswitch to Loaded Beast Underswitch to Scorpion Reach Underswitch Tap to Side Kickthrough Jumping Underswitch to Side Kickthrough Jumping Underswitch into Crab Reach Levitating Underswitch to Side Kickthrough Levitating Underswitch to Crab Reach
	SLIDE TO	-

BASE POSITION: **LOADED BEAST**	**SET**	Beast Deep Ape Pop to Deep Ape
	S&T	Front Step Front Step Through Front Kickthrough Underswitch
	FSS	Loaded Beast – Unload Wave Unload Scorpion Reach Beast Reach
	TO/INTO	-
	SLIDE TO	Side Kickthrough Underswitch Scorpion Switch Underswitch into Crab Reach

WRITING FLOWS

Over the previous pages, we've begun to share the concept of the specific verbal and written language that we use to communicate Animal Flow. In addition to the full names, there's a simple but effective set of abbreviations that you'll want to learn in order to further enhance the way you use this language.

Components	FSS	Form Specific Stretch/es
	S&T	Switches and Transitions
	TF	Traveling Forms
Traveling Forms (TF)	FTB	Forward Traveling Beast
	RTB	Reverse Traveling Beast
	LTB	Lateral Traveling Beast
	FTC	Forward Traveling Crab
	RTC	Reverse Traveling Crab
	FTF	Forward Traveling Frog
	FTA	Forward Traveling Ape
	LTA1	Lateral Traveling Ape 1: Low Hip
	LTA2	Lateral Traveling Ape 2: High Hip
	LTA3	Lateral Traveling Ape 3: Reaching
Form Specific Stretches (FSS)	LBU	Loaded Beast Unload
	WU	Wave Unload
	BR	Beast Reach
	AR	Ape Reach
	CR	Crab Reach
	SR	Scorpion Reach
	LB	Loaded Beast*
Switches and Transitions (S&T)	US	Underswitch
	USTap	Underswitch Tap
	JUS	Jumping Underswitch
	SKT	Side Kickthrough
	J-SKT	Jumping Side Kickthrough**
	L-SKT	Levitating Side Kickthrough**
	FS	Full Scorpion
	SS	Scorpion Switch
	FStep	Front Step
	FST	Front Step Through
	FKT	Front Kickthrough

*Remember that Loaded Beast is a Base Position! We've grouped it with FSS here for ease of reference.

**When writing a Jumping or Levitating Side Kickthrough, you'll see a L - or J - which would mean levitate or jump to.

HOW TO WRITE OUT A FLOW

We use the same verbal Call Out formula in our written Flows. Whether writing or speaking, the key is to remember to use DIRECTION > LIMB > COMMAND, or, in the case of Jumping or Levitating Side Kickthroughs, ACTION > DIRECTION > LIMB > COMMAND.

For example:

L L SKT = Left Leg Side Kickthrough

Within all written flows, we utilize punctuation to denote how to transition between each movement as well as where one movement ends and another begins.

Here are a few guidelines to follow when writing out your Flows:

- Always start with the base position, writing the name in full. For instance, if you'd say "Set Crab", then you'd write "Crab"
- Use commas between each call out, unless it requires a TO/INTO (see next point)
- For Call Outs that utilize a TO/INTO, use a dash in place of the words TO or INTO. Ex: "Left leg Underswitch TO Loaded Beast" would be written as "*L L US – LB*"
- You would also use a dash to represent the command "Return To" after a FSS
- When returning to a position after a FSS, write out the full name of the position you are returning to, for example: "Right arm Crab Reach, return to Crab" would be written as "*R A CR – Crab*". The exception is Loaded Beast which is written as "LB".

Command/Movement	Symbol
"Set"	"Ape", "Beast", Crab" or "Loaded Beast"
Regular transition to next move	, (comma)
TO/INTO	- (dash)
Return to	- (dash)
PB-	Pop back to
Sl-	Slide to

Example 1:

Crab, L L US, R L US, L L JUS - R L SKT

Translates to:

Set Crab
Left leg Underswitch
Right leg Underswitch
Left leg Jumping Underswitch TO right leg Side Kickthrough

Example 2:

R A CR - Crab, L L FS, Crab

Translates to:

Right Arm Crab Reach
Return to Crab
Left Leg Full Scorpion
Set Crab

Example 3:

R A CR – Crab – L L JUS

Translates to:

Right Arm Crab Reach
Return to crab INTO
Left leg Jumping Underswitch

Note: In this example, the first dash indicates "return to" because we are returning to the base Crab position, which is written out. The second dash indicates the command "INTO", signifying that we don't want the reaching hand to make contact with the ground before going into the Jumping Underswitch.

SAMPLE FLOWS

Below you'll find 5 sample flows to help in your own progress. Like the Beast Flow, these flows are excellent examples of how the pieces can fit together - just keep in mind that the combinations are endless! Practice each Flow, either repeating the Flow as it's written or by leading with the opposite leg.

Referring to the abbreviations on page 74, translate the full Call Out versions into the correct written format. Check the box at the bottom of the next page to find the correct answers for each Flow!

FLOW 1	Call Out	Written Flow
	Set Crab Right leg Underswitch Left leg Underswitch Right arm Crab Reach, return to Crab Left arm Crab Reach, return to Crab	

FLOW 2	Call Out	Written Flow
	Set Crab Right leg Full Scorpion Left leg Underswitch Right leg Side Kickthrough Jump to left leg Side Kickthrough Set Crab	

FLOW 3	Call Out	Written Flow
	Set Loaded Beast Wave Unload, return to Loaded Beast Right leg Beast Reach TO Front Step, return to Loaded Beast Right leg Front Kickthrough, pop back to Loaded Beast Left leg Underswitch TO right arm Crab Reach, return to Crab	

FLOW 4	Call Out	Written Flow
	Set Beast Right leg Side Kickthrough Levitate to left leg Side Kickthrough Left leg Jumping Underswitch INTO left arm Crab Reach, return to Crab INTO Right leg Underswitch	

FLOW	Call Out	Written Flow
5	Set Crab Right leg Jumping Underswitch Right Leg Full Scorpion Left leg Jumping Underswitch Left leg Full Scorpion Jump to left leg Side Kickthrough Levitate to right leg Side Kickthrough Right leg Underswitch INTO Loaded Beast Right leg Front Step Through, return to Loaded Beast Left leg Front Kickthrough, pop back to Loaded Beast Set Beast	

Answers:

Flow 1: Crab, R L US, L L US, R A CR – Crab, L A CR – Crab
Flow 2: Crab, R L FS, L L US, R L SKT, L L J-SKT, Crab
Flow 3: Loaded Beast, WU – LB, R L BR – FStep – LB, R L FKT – LB, L L US – R A CR – Crab
Flow 4: Beast, R L SKT, L L L-SKT, L L JUS – L A CR – Crab – R L US
Flow 5: Crab, R L JUS, R L FS, L L JUS, L L FS, L L J-SKT, R L L-SKT, R L US – LB, R L FST – LB, L L FKT – LB, Beast

CHAPTER 5

PRACTICE

BEGINNING YOUR ANIMAL FLOW PRACTICE

Now that you've completed the workshop, you've got a ton of information - but where do you begin your practice?

DRILL THE BASICS

The best way to start practicing AF right away is to drill the basics. It's common for new students who've just completed the course to want to focus only on the Flows, or other parts they particularly like. While there's nothing wrong with focusing on the movements that make us feel good, it's important to consistently drill ALL movements.

Even if it's only for a rep or two, by practicing every movement you'll be keeping the patterns fresh in your system.

SAMPLE WARM UP

Here's an example of the warm-up Mike performs every single time he practices AF:

1. **Wrist Mobs:** Go through each Wrist Mob and any additional wrist and hand preparation activities that you have in your toolbox.
2. **Activations:** Perform both Beast and Crab Activations at your current threshold. Perform at least two sets each for max. time (with perfect technique).
3. **Form Specific Stretches:** Perform the Form Specific Stretch Flow from Chapter 4. Perform at least two reps of each stretch or go through the entire flow twice.
4. **Traveling Forms:** Do your ABC's, making sure you hit each variation of each base.

   Ape – Lateral Ape versions 1,2,3, and Forward Traveling Ape/Frog

   Beast – Forward, Reverse, Lateral

   Crab – Forward, Reverse

5. **Switches & Transitions:** Go through each S&T from each category, even if it's for just a couple of reps. Call out to yourself either out loud or in your head.

Underswitch	Levitating Side Kickthrough
Underswitch Tap	Scorpion Switch
Jumping Underswitch	Full Scorpion
Side Kickthrough	Front Step
Jumping Side Kickthrough	Front Step Through
	Front Kickthrough

6. **Practice:** At this point you can decide how you want to spend the rest of your flow session. You could focus on free flow, design a flow, practice something that you're not strong at, or practice the things you really like. You'll likely want to spend time on the things you love most, but remember that to become a well-rounded Flowist, you'll need to invest time in the areas that feel most challenging at the start of your journey.

PRACTICING YOUR CALL OUTS

The Animal Flow language is just as important as the movements, and just like learning any new language, it's going to take practice and consistency!

You'll have the opportunity to use the Call Out language as you're teaching the Animal Flow moves to your clients and classes, but don't be afraid to use it in your personal practice. We highly recommend calling out your own movements either out loud or to yourself while practicing. This is an easy way to get in a little extra practice, and really lock in the language.

Here are some great ways to practice your Call Outs.

1. **Voice recording**. Most smart phones have a Voice Note or Voice Memo app that allows you to record your voice. Design a Flow of 8-12 movements then record it (slowly!) on your device. Play it back while practicing the Flow. You can also do this with the Beast Flow, any of the sample Flows included in this manual, and any of the Homework Flows that are posted in the Animal Flow Certified Instructors group on Facebook.
2. **Vocal solo practice**. While it feels a little strange at first, one of the best ways to master the Call Out language is to vocalize the language in your own practice.
    - You can Call Out all your drills in full, in the same way as we do during the workshop – for instance, if performing Front Steps, you would Call Out the movement ('Left leg Front Step') before initiating the move.

- Try combining your Call Out practice with your Free Flow exploration. Set a timer for 1-2 minutes and vocalize each movement as you perform it. This adds an additional layer of complexity as you need to bring awareness to the skill of developing Flows spontaneously.

3. **Engage other instructors**. Get together (online or in person) and practice your Call Outs either by building a Flow together in real time or playing a game of 'pass along', where you take turns to contribute 2-3 moves to a Flow. Practice your Call Out language as you go.

THE MOVEMENT MATRIX

The Movement Matrix is an in-depth resource with all of the possible movements or combinations that you can use when designing an L1 flow. The Matrix shows you all of the different ways in which you can get into or out of a position and their corresponding Call Outs. It includes the Base positions, Switches and Transitions, and Form Specific Stretches. None of the Traveling Forms are included in the Matrix as these are not used in L1 flows.

The Movement Matrix is a great way to better understand the Call Outs and countless options available when creating a flow with L1 movements. This resource is highly recommended for anyone designing the Flow for their Test Out or those looking to take their practice to the next level.

See your online Instructor Resources → Call Out/Movement Matrix

THE ACCELERATOR COURSE

The Accelerator is an 8-week course designed to help guide you in your test out preparation. Mike Fitch takes you through weekly study materials, assigns homework for you to practice throughout the week, and tests your knowledge along the way. It is recommended to follow along weekly though the accelerator can be taken at your own pace. For those who want to become certified instructors, it is important to keep the 30–90-day Test Out timeframe in mind as you work through the accelerator.

The Accelerator is optional but highly recommended for anyone wanting to further their practice and knowledge of the L1 material and to pass their Test Out with ease.

STAYING CURRENT WITH YOUR PRACTICE

You'll find lots of ways to stay fresh and up-to-date with your Animal Flow practice. These include:

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook

We have such an incredible global community of Animal Flow instructors, and it's easy to interact with them on our private Facebook page. Request to join the group for Animal Flow Certified Instructors, at:

www.facebook.com/groups/AnimalFlowCoaches/

You will be prompted to answer two questions when you request to join, so please be sure to answer those. If your Facebook name is different from the name you registered under, please send us an email to let us know.

Once on the page, you'll see that other instructors are regularly posting their practice videos and questions. You'll also find what we call the "Weekly Homework Assignment," from one of our Master Instructors. At the end of the week, the Master Instructor will provide a follow up video with feedback based on the homework submitted.

Note that some regions, including Australia/New Zealand, Spain, UK, and others also have smaller groups for Instructors from that area. Your Master Instructor can advise you on any additional groups that exist in your region.

Instagram

If you're on Instagram, check out and follow the **@AnimalFlowOfficial** account. Every single day we repost an Animal Flow-related post from one of our instructors. Once you become a Certified Instructor, be sure to tag us in any of your posts so that you can be featured. We also regularly share shout outs for classes that are happening all around the world – tag us in your IG Stories so that we can share what you're up to. Remember to geo-tag your location so it's easy for people to find you!

ANIMAL FLOW ON DEMAND

Animal Flow's On Demand channel is a subscription service that gives you unlimited access to tutorials, classes, and Flows with Mike and the Master Instructor team.

https://ondemand.animalflow.com/

As an important part of our Animal Flow community, you get access to special rates and discounts for On Demand so if you're looking for inspiration for your Flow practice, or reminders on those small but critical details in your technical execution, be sure to take advantage of it!

THE FLOWIST

The Flowist is Animal Flow's digital magazine that addresses a wide range of topics within the categories of Play, Practice, Performance, Perspectives, and News. Articles discuss a wide range of topics and include but are not limited to: ways in which you can improve your technique, how to incorporate flow into your other movement practices, sport-specific applications of AF, community based events, and current scientific research or other publications.

The Flowist is for all those who want to broaden their understanding of Animal Flow's application and stay current with the latest developments.

https://animalflow.com/the-flowist/

JAMS

One of the things that we're most proud of with Animal Flow is our community. It's very common for Animal Flow Instructors to meet up with each other all around the world. This could be with other instructors from your area whom you practice with on a regular basis, or it could be a one-time meet-up when you're visiting a new place. Feel free to post on the Instructors FB page that you'll be traveling and would like to meet up, or that you'll be hosting a jam and see who is available in your area.

What do I do at a jam?

Jams do not follow a strict format, but the general practice templates shared in the previous section are a great way to warm up and drill the basics as a group. From there, jams offer an opportunity to practice Call Outs with others, drill short movement sequences, or create a full Flow.

INSTRUCTOR RESOURCE AREA

We provide additional resources on the Animal Flow website. The level of access you have depends on whether you have completed the certification process or not.

1. **All Workshop Students:** Everyone who completes the workshop has access to the Call Out tutorial for L1. In this video, Mike provides a detailed overview of the Call Out language: You will need to be logged in to access that section.

2. **Certified Instructors:** Once you've passed your Test Out and are officially a Certified Animal Flow Instructor, you will have access to the rest of the Instructor Resource Area. This includes additional tips videos, archives of all the previous Homework assignments, sample group class formats, and a video of Mike teaching a sample class. Here you will also find the Instructor Agreement, FAQ, Trademark Guidelines, the Code of Conduct and other helpful information.

   This is also where you find access to purchase your Certified Animal Flow Instructor tank tops and shirts.

ADVANCED WORKSHOPS

We offer numerous opportunities for you to further your Animal Flow practice.

LEVEL 2

Level 2 workshops are open to anyone who has completed Level 1. You'll learn how to successfully perform the Level 2 movements, as well as how to integrate them with Level 1 to create extended Flows with an increased degree of complexity and intensity. The two-day agenda includes:

- ✓ Review of key Level 1 moves
- ✓ Intro to Hand Balancing: Tuck Balance
- ✓ New Transitions: Reaching Underswitch, Scorpion Sweep, Crocodile Roll, Pop Out, Roll Through, and Underswitch to Ape
- ✓ New traveling forms: Bear, Leopard, Crocodile Crawl
- ✓ Further understanding of Energy Rolls, Redirects and Brakes
- ✓ How to strategically use tempo changes
- ✓ Properly integrating Traveling Forms
- ✓ Combining L1 & L2 movements
- ✓ Intermediate flow design

LEVEL 3

Level 3 workshops are open to all those who have completed their Level 1 and Level 2 certifications. To attend a Level 3 workshop, you must be able to hold a Tuck Balance for a minimum of 1 second as per the L2 Test Out.

The agenda includes but is not limited to:

- ✓ Tuck balance and Float training
- ✓ L3 movement & language breakdowns
- ✓ Working with ground reaction force
- ✓ Creating style through the exploration of the skeletal system
- ✓ Musicality and Free Flow

Seminars on:

- ✓ The 4 Pillars
- ✓ Range of Motion for Hand Balancing
- ✓ Anatomy and biomechanics of Flow
- ✓ Breath mobility

Prior to the workshop, you'll have access to the private Facebook group for students where Mike will post homework and other info to help you prepare for the workshop and your L3 certification.

MENTORSHIP WEEKS

We offer one Mentorship per year, in locations around the world.

At a Mentorship, you'll join Mike Fitch and select Master Instructors for a full week (7 days/6 nights) of immersive learning. We'll cover a wide range of sessions that are all about enhancing, implementing, and promoting your Animal Flow skills. The weeklong curriculum varies in each location but typically includes updates on the AF system and any scientific developments, group classes, applications for special populations, advanced flow design, and more. Plus, you'll enjoy awesome social activities with other Animal Flow Instructors and go on amazing adventures in the surrounding areas.

RE-SIT A WORKSHOP

No matter how long you've been practicing Animal Flow, there are always benefits to taking your Level 1 workshop again to brush up on the specifics and refine your practice. Once you've taken Level 1, you'll be eligible to re-sit the workshop for just 50% of the advertised rate. Send an email to admin@animalflow.com with the workshop you want to attend and we'll let you know how to lock it in!

The 50% discount is also available when you re-sit Level 2.

APPENDICES

CERTIFICATION TEST OUT INSTRUCTIONS

In order to become an Official / Certified Animal Flow Instructor, you'll need to demonstrate that you've mastered what you've learned and are able to coach your clients or students. This is done through the "Test Out."

Test Outs are due within 30-90 days after completing your workshop. There will be two sections of the Test Out and each should be submitted in its own video as listed below.

- **Video 1:** Performing the movements yourself
- **Video 2:** Create your own Flow and Call Out the flow to another person.

You may also have the option of attending a live Test Out session. Live Test Outs are offered in-person in some cities or online a few times a year. The test out requirements for what you need to demonstrate are the same whether you are testing out live or via video submission.

Some live Test Outs are delivered by Master Instructors who combine the Test Out process with a review session of the movements. Registration fees are charged for the combined review and Test Out events hosted by MIs.

VIDEO 1: PERFORM THE MOVEMENTS YOURSELF

Demonstrate that you can perform each of the Animal Flow moves listed below.

1. **Perform repetitions of each movement as per the detailed list below.** FSS, for example, require 2 repetitions per side and S&Ts require 3-4 per side.
2. **Do not put the movements into a flow**. We need to see each movement clearly, one at a time, and **in the precise order listed below**.
3. You can do the movements sequentially one after the other without stopping. However, we recommend taking breaks to ensure your technique does not decline with fatigue. Please do not film your break periods.
4. Doing the movements out of order, in a flow, or with too many reps, can double or triple the amount of time it takes the Master Instructor to grade your video and delay your test out results.

In this section, we want to see that you understand the intention and sequencing of each Level 1 movement. Pay attention to your form and the details!

Below is the list of movements to demonstrate and their required repetitions:

Form Specific Stretches – 2 Repetitions each

1. Loaded Beast – Unload (2 Repetitions)
2. Wave Unload (2 Repetitions)
3. Beast Reach (2 Repetitions per side)
4. Ape Reach (2 Repetitions)
5. Crab Reach (2 Repetitions per side)
6. Scorpion Reach (2 Repetitions per side)

Traveling Forms – 5-6 Repetitions per direction

1. Lateral Traveling Ape Version 1 – Low Hip
2. Lateral Traveling Ape Version 2- High Hip
    a. High Hip Modified Beast Pause (3-4/direction)
    b. Integrated as one movement (3-4/direction)
3. Lateral Traveling Ape Version 3 – Reaching
4. Forward Traveling Ape
5. Traveling Beast – Forward and Reverse
6. Traveling Crab – Forward and Reverse

Switches and Transitions – 3-4 Repetitions per side

1. Underswitch
2. Underswitch Tap
3. Jumping Underswitch
    a. Modified Beast Pause (2 reps/side)
    b. Integrated as one movement (2-4 reps/side)
4. Side Kickthrough
5. Jumping Side Kickthrough
6. Levitating Side Kickthrough
    a. High Hip Modified Beast Pause (2 reps/side)
    b. Integrated as one movement (2-4 reps/side)
7. Scorpion Switch
8. Full Scorpion
9. Front Step Through
10. Front Kickthrough

VIDEO 2: DESIGN AND CALL OUT A FLOW

In this section, we want to assess your ability to both design and properly Call Out a flow to your participant. You should design a 90-second flow with 12-15 movements and teach it to a client, friend, or someone who has taken the workshop.

Here are some rules and guidelines:

1. The Flow should be 90 seconds long and include 12-15 movements.
2. **Use only L1 moves from the Switches and Transitions and FSS categories.**
3. Do not include Activations or Traveling Forms in the flow.
4. **Both you and your participant must appear on camera for the Flow.** You will *not* be performing the Flow yourself. Instead, you will teach it to someone else then video yourself calling out the flow while they perform it. By the time you video it, they should already have learned the flow and you will only need to provide corrections and additional cues where needed.
5. If the participant makes a mistake, correct them, and move on. Do *not* stop and re-teach the movement. We want to see that you recognize the error and give instructions to correct it. If the student makes a major mistake that requires extra coaching, simply stop and reshoot the video.
6. **Do not use notes** when Calling Out the Flow as this detracts from your ability to actively coach your participant.
7. The Flow is an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of how the movements work together. As such, **do not perform the same movement back to back on alternating sides** as this does not lend itself to the concept of flow and optimizing movement variability.
8. If English is not your primary language, you can Call Out the direction and limb in your preferred language as well as any cueing your participant requires. Remember, the names of the Animal Flow moves must always be in English.

SUBMITTING YOUR VIDEOS

1. **DUE DATES**

   We encourage you to start practicing shortly after the workshop to be ready to **submit your videos between 30 – 90 days.**

- Do not submit your videos earlier than 30 days as we believe you need at least that much time to practice.
- Do not wait longer than 90 days as we see a high degree of readiness and success within that timeline. After 90 days we begin to see a significant drop in the details and success.
- If you have an injury or another reason that you can't complete your Test Out videos within 90 days, please request an extension by emailing us at Certifications@AnimalFlow.com. You will be granted one 90-day extension though we ask that you do not abuse the extension process.
- If your video is submitted 180 days or more after your workshop, we'll need to assess a late fee of $50. A late submission creates extra unplanned work, and we typically must pay someone else to take on the grading for delayed Test Out submissions.
- If you have not submitted your video within one year of the workshop, you will need to either retake the workshop (at a 50% discount) or hire one of the MIs to provide one-on-one coaching to get you ready for submission.

2. **Video Formats: Submit only two videos**. One for Section 1 (Performing the Movements) and one for Section 2 (Coaching the Flow).

3. **Video Quality:** The videos do not need to be very high quality. We simply want to see that you can perform the movements and Call Out a Flow.
   A. Filming on a cell phone is suitable.
   B. You **do not** have to include labels, graphics, or elaborate editing.
   C. Please make sure we can hear you in the coaching section. Avoid filming in loud gyms, places with a lot of background noise, or with any music.
   D. Film in HORIZONTAL. If you film vertical, you will likely go out of frame.

4. **Music:** DO NOT use music in your video.
   - Copyrighted music will get blocked by YouTube, making your video inaccessible to us.

5. **Uploading:** Upload your videos to your own video streaming channel (YouTube, Vimeo), or to our Dropbox folder. Do NOT send us videos as email

attachments that have to be downloaded, including via WeTransfer or Google Drive. We cannot accept videos that we have to download to watch.

- If you don't have a YouTube or similar video channel, you can upload your videos to Animal Flow's Dropbox link (details can be found in your Instructor Resources).
- If you are uploading to your own YouTube channel or another video streaming service, make sure the video is set to UNLISTED. Do NOT set it to "private" or to "public." If it is private, we cannot see it and your video grading will be delayed. If it is public, anyone can see the test and we will ask you to take the video down.

SUBMITTING YOUR TEST OUT

To submit your videos for grading, you will need to follow the instructions found under the "Instructor Resources" tab on the website; you must be signed into your account in order to access the Level 1 submission page. You will be asked to provide the following information:

- Your full name used for registration
- Your full name as you'd like it listed on your Certificate
- Your email address
- The date, location, and Master Instructor for the workshop you attended
- Your current location (this will be listed on your social media announcement)
- Provide the links to your TWO uploaded Test Out videos OR upload them to the Animal Flow Dropbox account (details can be found in your Instructor Resources).
- If you are applying to become a Certified Animal Flow Instructor, you need to upload your qualifying credentials. This can include your personal training or group fitness certifications; yoga teacher training; martial arts instructor and/or dance instructor experience; a related degree, or other approved credentials. Credentials do not need to be for the current year, but you do need to have attained them previously. If you do not have a copy to upload, you can list them on the form.
- Upload a photo of yourself performing your favorite AF movement (this is used for your social media announcement).

GRADING

1. Your video submission will be graded by one of our Master Instructors. This

might be the MI who taught your workshop or another MI. All MIs go through the same training on grading tests.

2. The Master Instructor uses an Assessment Form to grade your video. The MI will assign points for each section and email you the Assessment Form with notes on the areas that need further practice.
3. You need to score at least 80% to pass. If you don't pass, you will be able to resubmit your video again.
4. It may take up to 3 weeks for you to receive your results.

RESUBMISSIONS

1. If you don't pass your video test on the first submission, you'll receive detailed feedback from your MI with notes on what you need to correct. You are allowed to resubmit. Usually, the MI will ask you to resubmit just the specific moves or areas that need work. There is no fee for this resubmission.
2. If you still don't pass after your second submission, a $50 fee is required for a third submission. This fee covers the costs we incur for paying the MI to spend additional hours reviewing the same student. If you don't pass the 3rd time, you'll need to retake the workshop (at 50% discount) or hire an MI to provide one-on-one coaching as needed.
3. We ask you to take the submission process seriously – please follow the instructions and pay close attention to the feedback. Don't submit a poor-quality test just to see what the feedback will be.

CHEAT SHEET: LEVEL 1 SCORPION VARIATIONS			
	Starts in	**Ends in**	**Notes**
Scorpion Reach	Loaded Beast 	Loaded Beast 	
Scorpion Switch	Static Beast 	Modified Crab 	
Full Scorpion	Static Crab 	Modified Crab 	

ANIMAL FLOW TERMS

Base Limb

The arm or leg that stays connected to the ground throughout either the initiation of, or entirety of, a movement. For instance, in a Left leg Front Step, the right hand/arm stays in position throughout the movement, making it the 'base' arm.

Base Position

Ape, Beast, Crab, or Loaded Beast are all known as Base Positions.

Call Out

The verbal delivery of Animal Flow instructions according to the rules of the program. Any use of the Animal Flow language is considered a Call Out, whether you're drilling movements or combining them into a full sequence.

A 'Freestyle Call Out' refers to the style of Flow that requires Flowists to respond to movements that are spontaneously instructed. If you were to 'write out the Call Out' as in a Choreographed Flow, you would itemize the names of the movements in the order in which they are to be performed, either in full or according to the approved abbreviations. See more on 'Calling Out' in the language section of Chapter 4.

End Position

The final position of all Switches & Transitions, and the second position of all Form Specific Stretches are all known as 'End Positions'.

Flowist

Someone who practices Animal Flow.

Flow Jam

A Flow Jam (or 'Jam' for short) is a gathering of Flowists and is intended for the purpose of practicing Animal Flow in an informal setting.

Forward Shoulder Load

When shoulders are aligned in front of the wrists in a weight bearing position such as in Forward Traveling Ape or Loaded Beast – Unload.

Movement Window

Any space that is created through which a limb can pass. When we 'open a movement window', we are effectively creating a suitably sized space for a movement to occur. This may mean creating a movement window by stepping wide and forward in a Front Step to then allow the back leg to pass through. Similarly, lifting contralateral limbs in Crab or Beast creates a movement window to bring a leg underneath the body in an Underswitch or another S&T.

Peak Position

The term Peak Position refers to the highest point that can be reached with our hips during positions that require inversion. In Level 1 we see this in Wave Unload, Beast Reach, Full Scorpion, Scorpion Switch, Scorpion Reach, Levitating Side Kickthrough, and Lateral Traveling Ape – version 2.

Press On The Gas

This is a colloquial way to reference pressing on the accelerator of a car. To do so in Animal Flow references driving down through our forefoot, taking our ankle into plantarflexion and lifting the heel (or heels) from the ground. By contrast, when the heels are flat, we would consider the brakes to be on.

Transitional Position (Modified Beast, HHMB)

This refers to a variation of a Base Position that is primarily used as a transitional point.

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