GORILLA

The Gorilla is a great exercise to stretch the calves primarily and the hamstrings secondarily.

Technical points:

Begin in a standing position, elongating the body, with toes pointing forwards and feet hip width apart. Keeping your leg as straight as you can, bend over from your hips, reach towards your toes and walk with your hands forward until your palms are fully on the ground.

You should now be an Λ shape, or as close as possible to it. If needed allow your knees to bend and your heels to come off the ground. In the end the aim is to gradually improve your mobility and flexibility so your legs are straight and heels on the ground.

Begin walking forward alternating hands and feet and keeping the toes pointing forwards. If you can step with your heels first, if not step with your toes. Step as far forward as you can, as close to your hands as you can while keeping the legs from bending. If the legs bend take a shorter step.

Abdominal muscles tense as you use them to move your legs forward, instead of hitching the leg from the hip. Prevent the hip from swaying from side to side and look towards your knees. Drive your chest towards your knees as best as you can and try to keep your back straight. Toes face forward.

When you want to stop, reverse the steps: bring your hands towards your toes, place your heels on the ground and either uncurl your spine from the bottom to the top (buttocks tucked in and abdominal muscles tensed) or bend your knees, straighten your back and stand up through a squat.

Regression: step with the heel off the ground and legs bent
Full movement: side

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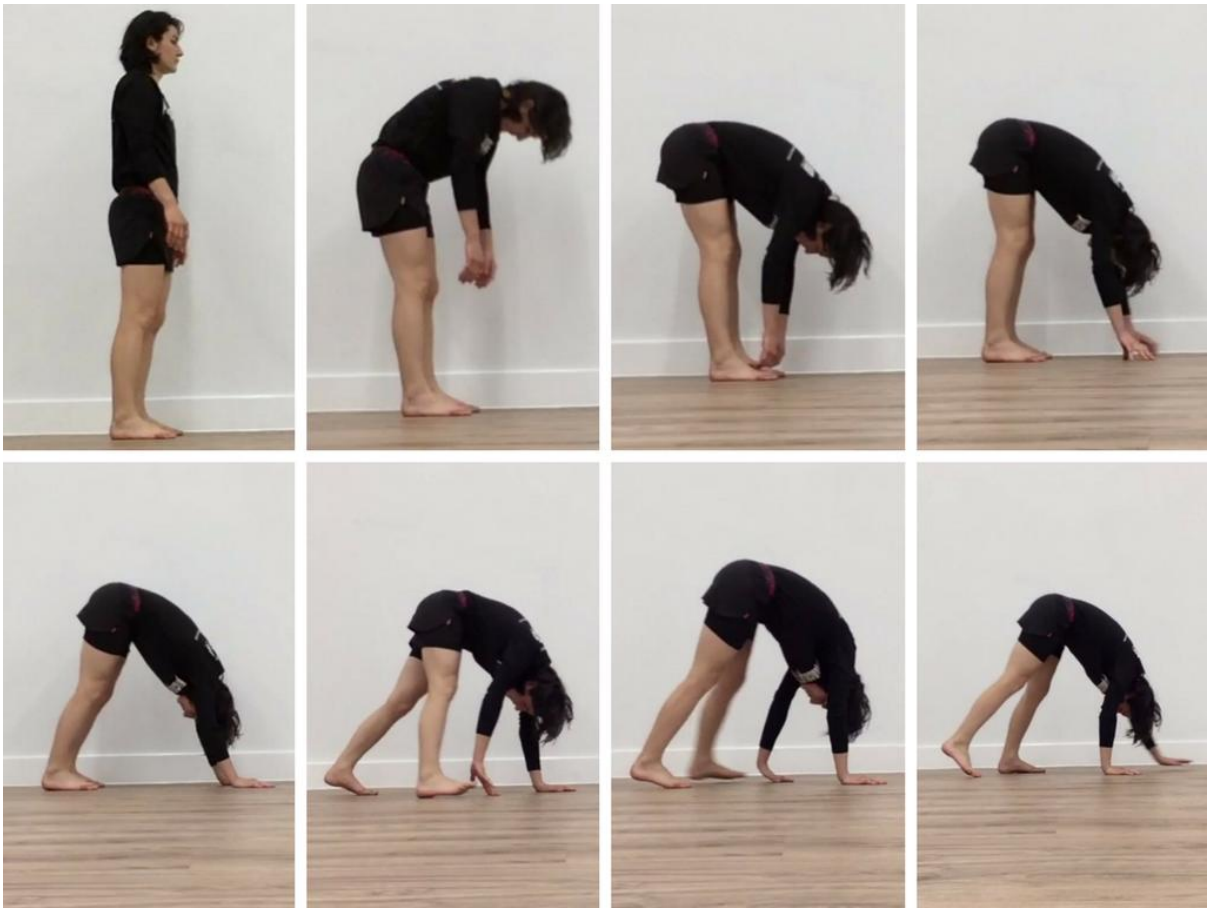

[Fig 101: Gorrilla]

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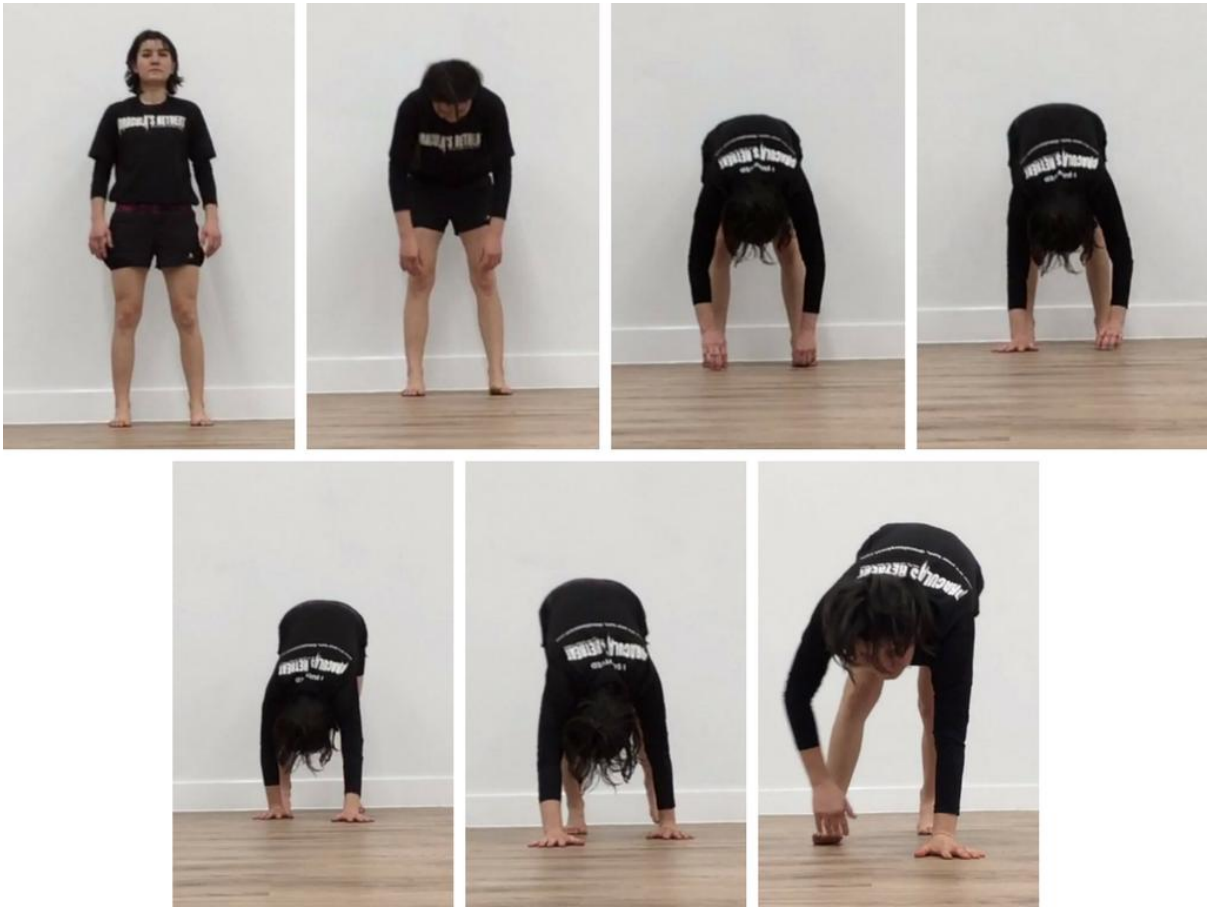
Full movement: front



[Fig 102: Gorrilla]

Benefits:

Stretching the back chain: calves, hamstrings, back.

Mobilising ankles in dorsiflexion and improving hip mobility.

Strengthening core.

Common errors and/or weaknesses to be aware of.

Keep in mind this is not an easy exercise. Weaknesses in the body can cause the body to position itself in different ways from one person to another. Don't force the exercise. Try to follow the instructions as closely as you can without causing injury. Some of the errors to be aware which can affect the efficiency of the exercise are:

- Toes going out to the side.
- Hitching the hip; causing a side to side movement.

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- Bending knees and lifting heels off the ground. This is very common, don't force it, it will come with practice.

- Lifting the head to look ahead. This compresses the cervical spine, instead look towards your knees and forwards from time to time to see where you're going.

Notes:

You can perform this exercise either as a dynamic stretch or a static stretch depending on the level of flexibility.

This exercises can be performed forwards as well as backwards.

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