



Becoming a Supple Leopard

Kelly Starrett

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LEARN HOW TO HACK HUMAN MOVEMENT

Join the movement that has reached millions of athletes and coaches; learn how to perform basic maintenance on your body, unlock your human potential, live pain free…and become a Supple Leopard.

Improve your athletic performance, extend your athletic career, treat body stiffness and achy joints, and rehabilitate injuries—all without having to seek out a coach, doctor, chiropractor, physical therapist, or masseur. In *Becoming a Supple Leopard*, Kelly Starrett—founder of *MobilityWod.com*—shares his revolutionary approach to mobility and maintenance of the human body and teaches you how to hack your own human movement, allowing you to live a healthy, happier, more fulfilling life.

Performance is what drives the human animal, but the human animal can be brought to an abrupt halt by dysfunctional movement patterns. Oftentimes, the factors that impede performance are invisible to not only the untrained eye, but also the majority of athletes and coaches. *Becoming a Supple Leopard* makes the invisible visible. In this one of a kind training manual, Starrett maps out a detailed system comprised of more than two hundred techniques and illuminates common movement errors that cause injury and rob you of speed, power, endurance, and strength. Whether you are a professional athlete, a weekend warrior, or simply someone wanting to live healthy and free from restrictions, *Becoming a Supple Leopard*, will teach you how to maintain your body and harness your genetic potential.

Learn How to:

- Prevent and rehabilitate common athletic injuries
- Overhaul your movement habits
- quickly identify, diagnose, and fix inefficient movement patterns
- Problem solve for pain and dysfunction in austere environments with little equipment
- Fix poor mechanics that rob power, bleed force, and dump torque
- Unlock reservoirs of athletic capacity you didn't know you had
- Identify and fix poor movement patterns in children
- Reverse the aging process
- Develop strategies that restore function to your joints and tissues
- Accelerate recovery after training sessions and competition
- Create personalized mobility prescriptions to improve movement efficiency
- Improve your quality of life through regained work capacity
- Run faster, jump higher, and throw farther

Becoming a Supple Leopard Details

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Author : Kelly Starrett

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From Reader Review Becoming a Supple Leopard for online ebook

Rian says

crossfit noise

Angela says

Are you tired of being told that your aches / pains / injuries / etc. will go away if you "just do more yoga / strength work / stretch more"? Do you feel like you're just cobbling together a mix of common sense & pseudo-science & hoping for the best without any clear idea of what is *actually* causing your problems and what is *actually* likely to fix things?

If so, you might at the very least find this book interesting. Starrett's philosophy is that "All human beings should be able to perform basic maintenance on themselves," which I can definitely get behind. Relying on doctors & PTs & trainers & whatnot to diagnose & fix every little ache & pain that comes up is just not tenable in the long-term.

This book is for:

- * Athletes who have been hurt
- * Athletes who think they might be getting hurt
- * Athletes who would like to not get hurt
- * Athletes who want to perform better at their sport
- * People who move their bodies
- * People who want to keep moving their bodies happily for as long as possible

By way of explaining the title:

"When I was fourteen I watched 'Gallipoli,' a World War I movie about two Australian sprinters going off to war, with my dad. There's a memorable scene in the beginning of the movie in which Archy, a rising track star, is being trained by his uncle Jack. The pep talk goes something like this:

Jack: What are your legs

Archy: Springs. Steel springs.

Jack: What are they going to do?

Archy: Hurl me down the track.

Jack: How fast can you run?

Archy: As fast as a leopard.

Jack: How fast are you going to run?

Arch: As fast as a leopard!

"For whatever reason, the 'fast as a leopard' mantra stuck with me. But it wasn't until a Navy SEAL buddy of mine said to me, "You know, Kelly, a leopard never stretches' that this notion of becoming a supple leopard drifted into my consciousness

"Of course a leopard doesn't stretch. A leopard has full physical capacity available at all times. It can attack and defend with full power at any moment. Unlike humans it doesn't need to prep for movement. It doesn't need to activate its glutes; it doesn't have to foam-roll; it doesn't have to raise its core temperature--it's just ready.

...

Metaphorically speaking, if you want to become a supple leopard, you need to understand how to move correctly in all situations. You also need the tools to deal with stiff and adaptively short tissues that restrict range-of-motion. This is the basis of my movement and mobility system."

At nearly 400 pages, it is a hefty tome, but it's also well- (and entertainingly) written, medically & scientifically precise without being overly technical, easy to read & follow, & filled with lots of pictures showing The Right Things and The Wrong Things pretty clearly. Also, it's clearly designed with average people who work at desk jobs & drive in cars in mind as much as more competitive / serious athletes.

Parts of it I think are designed to just be read, and other parts of it are designed as reference material. I would recommend reading Chapters 1-4, 6, & the first 20 pages or so of 7. Chapter 5 & most of 7 I think can be consulted as needed. Look at particular sections of Chapter 5 ("Movement Hierarchy") as you are working on each particular movement (air squat, jumping & landing, push-ups, etc.), & whatever specific sections of Chapter 7 pertain to your problem areas in terms of tightness / injury / lack of mobility / whatever.

Coach Starrett also has TONS of videos & other references on his mobility WOD website, so those make great follow-up materials as well.

Greg says

I love Kelly Starrett and so I was excited when I first learned about this book. I pre-ordered it as soon as I could. I was expecting to see his helpful Mobility WODs in book form, with lots of illustrations and descriptions.

The book does have a lot of great photos and explanations, but a lot of it deals with the various Crossfit movements, like lifting and even rowing and wall ball. That's helpful stuff indeed, but I'm fortunate to have great coaches at my gym to teach me that already, and there are other in-depth books like Starting Strength: Basic Barbell Training for lifting.

I just wanted a book where that I can turn to when I'm like, "hey, my lack of shoulder mobility is driving me crazy. What exercises can I do to work on that?" Only the last third of Supple Leopard is devoted to that.

Also, I wish there were an index. K-Star is a bottomless vessel of Jedi wisdom and I need help navigating it!

xDEAD ENDx says

The mobility work is useful stuff, but I'm left feeling a little bit limited since I don't have a lot of the equipment here at home (boxes, a stable pole to tie bands onto, barbells, etc.)...

The other half of the book is just silly. There's minimal references to works that would justify what is being said, and there seems to be a lot of contradictions. For instance, one of the trainers Starrett claims to be indebted to specifically says to turn the feet out at about 30 degrees when squatting -- quite different than the "perfectly straight" instructed in this book. Also, a number of the pictures go against the cues. It's almost as if "straight," "parallel," "upright" can loosely be used at some points, whereas at other points there's no margin of difference allowed. On top of all this, there's no mention of modification for those of us who aren't physiologically "perfect"; in fact, we're basically told that we *must* move in a certain way. I can only imagine the injuries that will result from that.

There is potential in the premise behind this book, but it comes off as just more CrossFit circle-jerking for people who are, like, "professional athletes".

Jessenia Kahn says

I love to work out with my main areas being Crossfit, Olympic Weightlifting, and general weightlifting in the gym. My coach recommended this book very early on into my Crossfit journey. I thank the heavens for Kelly Starlett, his books and his website MobilityWOD. There are so many people that come into the box dealing with previous injuries, mobility issues, or are currently dealing with injuries. I've spent a lot of time observing individuals and one big difference is the amount of time people spend on warming up, stretching, and general mobility. I attribute this book to being generally injury free. The two minor injuries I've had were due to technical errors and they were VERY MINOR. I am generally super mobile and have improved in the few problem areas I've had--mostly mobility and flexibility in the lats/front rack position. I always refer to this book when dealing with certain issues and have been a big fan of his vlog series on MobilityWOD.

As for the book, it is well organized. It is divided in to sections/areas of the body, which makes it easy to navigate to the areas you are interest in. I suggest reading the book from beginning to end at least once. Once you have done so, you can use it as reference and go to the sections you want to focus on. The text comes with supplemental pictures that enforces the concept he is trying to convey. Overall, after reading this book, I have gained sufficient knowledge to be able to pay more attention to my body and attempt to fix things I see or feel are off.

Kim Pallister says

I finished the book a while back but am just getting around to posting a review.

Kelly Starrett is really well known in the Crossfit community. As a Crossfit gym owner and Doctor of Physical Therapy, he has carved out a really niche of expertise as being the "joint, form and mobility guy" of crossfit. In addition, he has posted a ton of really useful videos to youtube over the past couple years that have made him a well known name. So, when he announced the book, many people pre-ordered and I was one of them.

The book is good, though it has a couple flaws (I'll get to those later). It's organized in two main parts.

The first section deals with categorizing all the major crossfit movements from gymnastics, olympic lifting,

etc. Deadlift, Clean & Jerk, Pullups, Handstand Pushups, and many more are organized based on the degree of difficulty (mostly having to do with how dynamically one has to stabilize the load & form). I liked this section, as the logic made a lot of sense, modulo the flaws below.

The second section discusses all the major muscles & joints in the body, and covers a range of techniques of how to better stretch, mobilize, floss, and otherwise work them into better range of motion and stability. This section was also useful, but made less sense to read logically back to back, rather than a reference to build a program from and/or to mix up a program of mobility work.

The flaws I found with the book are threefold. Two are relatively minor.

First, Starrett uses a little too much 'bro-speak' in his language. It's fine, and what we've come to expect, in his videos, which are quite conversational in tone, but in print it feels a little cheesy. This is a minor complaint

Second, given the huge number of videos he's posted in the past, there's probably very little here that you can't get by watching all the videos for free. However, I didn't mind paying some extra to have all of the same information in a logically organized form. It would also be nice to provide some reference/link to any youtube videos where those made sense to add clarity to the text/pictures in the book.

My third, and only major complaint, is that the book could have really benefited from spending some money on anatomical illustrations. When Starrett talks about torque in the shoulder capsule, it would be nice to have some actual "under the hood" illustrations.

These things aside, I still found the book useful and would recommend it to all crossfitters.

Chelsea Ursaner says

This is/was a life-changing book for me, up there with Marie Kondo's Magic of Tidying and Essentialism. I have such a deeper understanding of body mechanics and how to go about training in order to handle loaded movements with proper alignment, grace, and power... like a leopard.

A few things I'll be ruminating on and integrating into my exercise routines in the coming years:

- Start with focusing on the default position of an organized spine and neutral jaw
- Movements come down to motor control (technique) and range of motion
- Move from stable position to stable position. Think of the body archetypes and tunnel concept
- Mobilize in the positions you are trying to improve
- Try different mobilization techniques- pressure wave, smash and floss, and contract and relax
- Stay on the tissue until you feel a change
- Test and retest, no days off, no pain face

Everyday movements provide endless opportunities to notice areas of limitation and practice good positioning. I'm excited to up my game in the contexts I work in like slacklining, dance/hula hooping, running, golf... as well as trying new sports, like swimming!

Doug says

The absolute best reference on keeping your body pain-free while getting fit. Kelly not only knows his stuff, he makes it understandable to the layperson.

The detailed pics & descriptions make this book a must-have

Samantha says

Meh.

The first 20% of this book is just stupid and almost entirely unnecessary. I'm not exaggerating when I say it could have been condensed to two pages and the book overall would have been the better for it. To save you the trouble of reading a fifth of the book, I'll just sum it up for you. In one sentence: The way that I stand is the right way, and everyone should stand like me.

This point of view is distinctly different and separate from the sentence: I like to stand the right way. It's also indicative of the rest of the book. The book doesn't take into account differences in skeletal structure (because people do **PHYSIOLOGICALLY** have different pelvis structures, for example) and basically says that unless you move exactly the way Kelly Starrett does, you move the wrong way.

After the first fifth of the book, it gets mildly better. In all truthfulness though, the book doesn't become worth cracking until slightly after 50% of the way through the book.

This book also pretty accurately demonstrates that Starrett doesn't have a great understanding of hip rotation. He gets foot/knee rotation fantastically. Hip rotation, not so much. In his world it seems like it's only possible to externally rotate from the knee to the ankle. So if your leg is externally rotated (even if it's from the hip) it's bad, bad, bad! for your knees. This isn't true. If the rotation comes from the knee (either internally or externally) it IS bad. If it comes from the hip, and the hip, knee, and ankle all demonstrate the same degree of rotation, it's FINE.

If you do still want to check this book out, I would recommend doing it literally, as in you go to the library and check it out. It's not worth purchasing.

P.S. In case you were unaware, Kelly Starrett, leopards don't have stripes.

P.P.S. The more I think about it, reading this book was like watching KStar give himself a handjob.

Claire says

Highly recommended if you are an athlete, trainer, coach, or someone with a physically strenuous job. I don't really fall into any of those categories but the book was for me too.

If you weight train, I'd call this book essential. You need to know you're performing your lifts correctly to

both maximize your potential and to prevent injuries that can be exacerbated by repetitions over time. The book is full of photographs demonstrating a variety of exercises and common faults to avoid.

How does this relate to me? A lot of the gym exercises are models for movements we use in everyday life. Picking up laundry, your kids, or any lifting really. How many times do you sit down and stand up in a day? Squats are a model for how to do that without ruining your knees.

If you don't want to be a hunched over, pain-ridden person when you get older, this book matters to you.

I first saw Kelly Starrett on a segment of a Creative LIVE workshop. He has a doctorate in physical therapy, owns a CrossFit gym, and has worked with thousands of athletes to resolve injuries and improve their performance. He has seen his work in action.

I was intrigued by his talk about mobility and started watching and trying his free Mobility Workout-Of-the-Day videos from the beginning.

I've been doing what I call easy yoga for years with little change. I've always been inflexible and figured that's just how it was. After doing some of Kelly's MWODs, I noticed some improved flexibility. Kelly believes we can all improve our mobility, and I am on board.

It's not fast or easy, but with his test, do a mobilization, and retest approach, you can see the results. Even if I skip the test/retest, I can usually feel the difference.

Chances are you don't realize how matted down your tissues are and the amount of mobility you are missing. A lot of us spend a lot of time sitting in front of computers every day. That takes a significant toll on the body.

The book contains over 170 pages of mobilizations broken down by parts of the body with text and photographs demonstrating the actions and what they help or improve.

Many are scaled for different levels of ability, which is good because even when I look at something and think, "Oh, I can do that," I often find I'm too stiff.

There are a lot of different actions to try. I found myself reading, then going back a few pages to try something out before continuing. It's a great reference that I will be using often.

I'm committed to his 15-20 minutes a day for mobility work. The beauty is you don't even have to do it all at once. You need to do 2 minute chunks to effect change generally, but you can split it up and fit it into your day.

I dinged it a star for typos and no index though the contents are pretty good. I also wish he'd put his basic approaches for the mobilizations in the glossary for easy reference (e.g. smash & floss, pressure waving, paper-clipping). I bookmarked that section so I can refer to it as I assimilate his vernacular and try out his MWODs.

The book is a lot of info to take in, so might want to see what his Mobility WOD videos are like to see what you think first. I really like that he loves the scifi movie Dune even though he's a big, athletic, flexible guy. I also enjoy reading and hearing about how the body's muscles, bones, and fascia interrelate. His content is smart and accessible.

If you're not ready to put in some effort (2+ minute chunks!) that may be uncomfortable to effect change, you might not be ready for this book. I still recommend it though since there are things you can incorporate into your day.

ETA 11/12/15: Sounds like the 2nd edition is a significant improvement as it includes an index, 80 or so more pages of content, and has been rearranged some to make it easier to use.

Kristopher Muir says

Today I finished reading “Becoming a Supple Leopard” and I put it #3 on my list of books read in 2016. Kelly Starrett has taken something so simple and ubiquitous--movement--and given us a theoretical framework and practical prescriptions for how to improve how we move on a daily basis at home, at work, in the gym, and in athletic competition.

There are some daily reminders that we can all implement, like how to properly brace yourself and create torque before sitting or picking up any object, whether it's box at home or a 185-lb barbell in the gym. And there apparently is an optimal way to text as well. Sitting, as we know, is the new smoking. This book recommends that for every 30 minutes of sitting we need 4 minutes of mobility, with something like the Couch Stretch. That's a tall task for any of us, but it gives us something at which we can aim. Another technique to optimizing your movement is to spend 15 minutes every day on routine maintenance, not static stretching but mobilizing your problem areas with rollers, lacrosse balls, bands, etc. 15 minutes daily. No excuses.

Aside from everyday movement cues that I picked up, I now have a deeper understanding of the movement archetypes and how those can help me. I have certain athletic goals--overhead squat, pistol squat, etc.--and this book has given me a recipe of mobilizations to help achieve those goals. Whether you want to ameliorate your lower back pain or improve your back squat, investing in how you move will not only make you feel better but will likely enhance your quality of life.

Happy Reading!

Tayvonne says

I kind of want to give this book four and a half stars instead of five because even though I absolutely love this book and its easily my most useful I feel it has a few flaws.

1. Starrett seems to have gone commercial completely siding with Rogue making his website something you have to pay for and this book showing a lot of product placement.
2. I feel even though this is 400 page it could have been longer and more stuff could have been put into it. I remember WODs present on the site that aren't present in the book and that makes me think he is going to come out with another which makes me hopeful and kind of dismayed that he didn't cover as much as he could.

3. There was no test-retest in this books which I always felt was a huge part of his site. He just gives the mobility portion without showing or telling us how we should test the position out even though it is mostly common sense and if you've been following him long enough you should only know. This is only a gripe for the beginners who just jumped in and some of his less obvious mobilizations.

Otherwise this is a perfect book and if you care about your body and your performance it needs to be apart of your life.

Sandy Abel says

I am fascinated with the mechanics of the human body. This book was awesome! I wish I discovered this earlier in my life but I'm not dead yet! You are never to old to learn. Also, it is so important to keep moving as we get older to keep our joints lubricated, muscles and bones, strong. It is a good preventive maintenance book plus you learn great form and function.

Rebecca says

When I first finished this book and implemented its techniques, I had absolutely zero idea about anatomy and physiology. Now after delving into how the human body works, receiving formal training, I cannot endorse this book at all. It follows the older line of thought that it is muscle and tissue that controls everything, and that it can force change through outside influences.

Going into that further later, I will explain what exactly is wrong with this book, from someone who works in rehabilitation and strength training.

1. The form qualifications listed in this book assume that the readers all share the same physiology.
 - * Unfortunately, some people will have to "butt wink" due to how their femur fits in the hip socket.
 - * Some people will never be able to keep their knees behind their toes.
 - * Some people will have to have their feet turned out in any movement.

The only thing I can agree on is that if the spine and pelvis stays neutral through the movement, then the movement is good. If pain happens, then the body or the brain is not ready for the movement yet.

2. There are NO references. To the medical community at large, this book is no better than fiction because there is not references listed to others authors or even studies. Where did Kelly get all of this information? Anecdotal evidence is not good enough because of placebo.

3. Adding to above, if it worked for you, it is because you expect it to work and/or the person who recommended it to you expected it to work. This is just a small part of the placebo effect...

4. Which leads into the next thing. The book focused solely on the muscles and soft tissue. Yet what controls the tissues? The Nervous System. What implements your brain's idea of placebo? The Nervous System. Have a compressed nerve that is released through manual therapy? Mr. Therapist broke up a fight between different nerve branches.

This book would have been better served being a general strength and conditioning book, explaining the hallmarks of what good form feels like, what injury looks like. We have people with "horrible" posture who never get arthritis or pain, while we have people with pristine posture who ache with every step. The issue is a lot more complex than the book goes into, and it does the average layman a disservice to lead them into false sense of security. The people at large are capable of critical thinking!

Here is a PDF explaining the basics of the Somatic Nervous System, how it controls basic muscle contraction. This works the same in reverse. It can contract, and relax, based on what is needed. Sometimes it does not relax, however, and this is where "tightness" and "restriction" come from. Given a long enough period of time, the brain itself will "forget" how to move. Slowly easing into a movement, stopping when pain or hesitation presents and slowly pushing further over time, allows reclamation of full range of motion.. No smashing of the thigh adductors nor its association pain needed.

Sarah Clement says

This is less a book to read from cover to cover, and more a coffee table (or gym, more accurately) resource. I learned a lot from this book in terms of both movement and mobility, and I will return to this as a resource time and gain. I think the beginning chapters are certainly worth reading, however, and I tried to cheat the system by skipping right to the mobility bits and found myself returning to read them. I understand that the format of this new edition is much improved since the previous one, so I think a lot of the kinks were worked out, but I would like to see improvements to the index in future editions. I use indices all the time in non-fiction books, but in this it is especially important, and I think there needs to be more detailed listings for each body part and issues you might be dealing with. I think some of the information is more ideology than fact (simply because there's a lot we still don't know about movement and mobility), so I think that readers need to be cognisant that their movements may never look 'ideal' no matter how closely they follow Kelly's advice. Overall, however, this is an excellent book worth having on your shelves for both active, athletic people and those who spend too much time hunched over desks.
