

Hamstring Stretches

This first section includes examples of hip stretches that are easy and effective. These stretches are designed to target some of the more commonly tight and restricted muscles. The following sections include mobilizations and strengthening exercises that will help you as you progress through your rehabilitation.

Knee to Chest

Pull your knee toward your chest until you feel a stretch in your buttock area. Your other leg can be bent (as shown) or straight.

Hold for 30 seconds, and 3 repetitions per side.



Figure 4 Stretch for the Piriformis Muscle

Cross one leg over the other into a figure 4 position. Grab your crossed leg with your opposite hand (while maintaining the figure 4 position). Pull your bent leg toward your opposite shoulder until you feel a stretch in your buttock area.

Hold for 30 seconds, and 3 repetitions per side.



Pigeon Stretch

This advanced stretch should only be performed in a pain free range. Keep your front leg with the knee at 90 degrees and straight out in front with your back leg straight behind you. Lean forward as far as you can until you feel a stretch in your buttock. Do not twist your body.

Hold for 30 seconds, and 3 repetitions per side.



Hamstring Stretch in Doorway

This stretch should be performed very gently in a pain free range. Find a doorway and place one leg on the frame and stretch the opposite leg through the doorway. Try to keep your back with a neutral arch. As your hamstring relaxes, slowly move closer to the wall or doorframe.

Hold for at least 1 minute per side, and preferably 2 repetitions per side.



Full Squat with Adductor Stretch

This stretch should be performed very gently in a pain free range.

If you are unable to comfortably squat without assistance, utilize a door frame. Proceed into a full squat (with an upright posture) while slowly keeping your hips and knees in proper alignment. Your elbows can help to push the knees outward to improve the stretch of the adductor muscles. As your hamstring/buttocks relax, slowly move closer to the floor.

Hold for at least 1 minute.



Hamstring Mobilizations

This second section includes examples of hip/buttock mobilizations with the use of a foam roller. A massage tool (like the Thera-Band Standard Roller Massager) or a lacrosse (or tennis) ball can also be effective mobilization tools and are utilized similarly to the foam roll. If your injury is acute or recent, please take more care when performing these mobilizations. *(If you're taking blood thinning medications or have a blood clotting disorder, please speak with your physician prior to initiating a mobilization protocol.)*

Hamstring Self-Mobilization Using a Massage Tool

Use a massage tool such as the Thera-Band Standard Roller Massager or The Stick Self Roller Massager. If this is painful, do not to exceed a mild to moderate amount of pain. Roll out the entire hamstring area and feel free to work on other areas of the leg that feel tight or restricted. Move slowly and spend extra time on the more painful areas.

Perform for 1-2 minutes per calf.



Hamstring Mobilization Using the Foam Roller

Place the involved leg on the foam roller. Roll your hamstring back and forth on the foam roll. Move slowly and spend extra time on the more painful areas. Be sure to mobilize the entire hamstring and feel free to work on other areas of the leg that feel tight or restricted. If this is painful, do not exceed a mild to moderate amount of pain.

Perform for 1-2 minutes per hamstring.



IT Band Mobilization with Foam Roller

Position your affected side down onto the foam roller. Slowly roll your body back and forth along the entire length of the IT band and lateral thigh. Do not roll it over the greater trochanter of the hip (the boney part near your pelvis). Spend extra time on the most painful areas. Perform on both legs, but spend more time on the affected side.

Perform 1-2 minutes on each leg once per day.



Buttock Mobilization with Foam Roller

Position your affected side down onto the foam roller. Slowly roll your body back and forth along the buttock. Spend extra time on the most painful areas. Perform on both legs, but spend more time on the affected side.

Perform 1-2 minutes on each leg once per day.



Lacrosse Ball Mobilization of the Piriformis

Place a lacrosse or tennis ball into the buttock area. Lie on the ball and slowly apply firm pressure to the area. Gently move the ball around and hold over the tender areas.

Perform 1-2 minutes on each leg once per day.



Hamstring Strengthening Exercises

This third section includes examples of hamstring, lumbar extensor, pelvic, and buttock strengthening exercises. These exercises should only be performed in a pain free manner. If you experience a more than a mild amount of pain, discontinue the exercises. It is likely that the injury is too acute to begin a strengthening protocol. Once you have mastered these exercises, you can also start to incorporate exercises such as the barbell squat and the straight leg dead lift. In the next phase of strengthening exercises, you can start to incorporate more sport specific activities. If pain increases in the hamstring or injured area, then taper back the load and exercise until it can be performed relatively pain free.

Bridge Exercise - Starting Position

Lie on your back with your knees bent to prepare for the bridge exercise.



Bridge Exercise

Keep your pelvis level as you lift your hips/pelvis and buttocks into the air. Pause, and then return back down to the ground. Do not let your pelvis wobble as you move up and down.

Perform 2 sets of 10 repetitions, 1-2 times a day.



Bridge Exercise with Marching

Keep your pelvis level as you lift your hips/pelvis and buttocks into the air. Pause. Alternately, march on each foot. Lift your foot only 6-8 inches off of the ground. Return back down to the ground. Do not let your pelvis wobble as you move up and down or as you march your legs.

Perform 2-3 sets of 10 repetitions once per day.



Ball Bridge Exercise

Lie on your back with your feet on an exercise ball. Keep your pelvis level as you lift your hips/pelvis and buttocks into the air. Pause, and then return back down to the ground. Do not let your pelvis wobble as you move up and down. Do not hyperextend your knees, but keep a slight bend in the knees to activate the hamstring muscle more.

Perform 2-3 sets of 10 repetitions once per day.



Ball Bridge Exercise with Leg Raise

Keep your pelvis level as you lift your hips/pelvis and buttocks into the air. Pause, and then raise one leg about 8 inches. Return your leg to the exercise ball, and raise the other leg. Go slowly. If you are strong enough, then perform all 10 repetitions before lowering your buttocks back down to the ground. Do not let your pelvis wobble as you move up and down or when lifting your legs.

Perform 2-3 sets of 10 repetitions once per day.



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