

## Hamstring Strain Rehabilitation Exercises

You can begin gently stretching your hamstring right away by doing the standing hamstring stretch. Make sure you do not feel any sharp pain, only a mild discomfort in the back of your thigh when you are doing this stretch.

- **Standing hamstring stretch:** Place the heel of your injured leg on a stool about 15 inches high. Keep your knee straight. Lean forward, bending at the hips until you feel a mild stretch in the back of your thigh. Make sure you do not roll your shoulders and bend at the waist when doing this or you will stretch your lower back instead of your leg. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

After the standing hamstring stretch has become easier, you can do the standing calf stretch. You should stretch your calf muscle because it attaches near where your hamstring ends using the standing calf stretch.

- **Hamstring stretch on wall:** Lie on your back with your buttocks close to a doorway, and extend your legs straight out in front of you along the floor. Raise one leg and rest it against the wall next to the door frame. Your other leg should extend through the doorway. You should feel a stretch in the back of your thigh. Hold this position for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times and then switch legs and do the exercise again.
- **Standing calf stretch:** Facing a wall, put your hands against the wall at about eye level. Keep one leg back with the heel on the floor, and the other leg forward. Turn your back foot slightly inward (as if you were pigeon-toed) as you slowly lean into the wall until you feel a stretch in the back of your calf. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times and then switch the position of your legs and repeat the exercise 3 times. Do this exercise several times each day.

When the pain is gone, start strengthening your hamstrings using the following exercises.

- **Prone knee bend:** Lie on your stomach with your legs straight out behind you. Bend your knee so that your heel comes toward your buttocks. Hold 5 seconds. Relax and



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return your foot to the floor. Do 3 sets of 10. As this becomes easier you can add weights to your ankle.

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- **Prone hip extension:** Lie on your stomach with your legs straight out behind you. Tighten the buttocks and thigh muscles of your injured leg and lift it off the floor about 8 inches. Keep your knee straight. Hold for 5 seconds. Then lower your leg and relax. Do 3 sets of 10.
- **Resisted hamstring curl:** Sit in a chair facing a door (about 3 feet from the door). Loop and tie one end of the tubing around the ankle of one leg. Tie a knot in the other end of the tubing and shut the knot in the door. Bend your knee, bringing your foot down to the floor, and allow your foot to slide along the floor and move back underneath the chair, stretching the tubing. Slowly let your foot slide forward again. Do 3 sets of 10.

You can challenge yourself by moving the chair farther away from the door and increasing the resistance of the tubing.

- **Chair lift:** Lie on your back with your heels resting on the top of a chair. Slowly raise both hips off the floor. Hold for 2 seconds and lower slowly. Do 3 sets of 15.

After your hamstrings have become stronger and you feel your leg is stable, you can begin strengthening the quadriceps (the muscles in the front of the thigh) by doing lunges.

- **Lunge:** Stand and take a large step forward with your right leg. Dip your left knee down toward the floor and bend your right leg. Return to the starting position. Repeat the exercise, this time stepping forward with the left leg and dipping the leg on your right side down. Do 3 sets of 10 on each side.

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Standing hamstring stretch



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Standing calf stretch



Prone knee bend



Prone hip extension



Resisted hamstring curl



Chair lift



Lunge