

SPORTS INJURY INFO

“Keeping You Off The Sidelines”

*Flexibility Solutions:
Lower Body*

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10 Minutes to a More Flexible Lower Body

It doesn't take hours a day to get more flexible. Simply choosing a few key stretches and then sticking with them everyday will gain you more in flexibility than spending hours stretching.

The following exercises have been chosen for their ability to functionally stretch the body, and for targeting the muscles that are most commonly tight. Pick a few or do them all. This 10 minute investment in your flexibility can help prevent sports injuries, and keep you off the sidelines.

Active Hamstring Stretch

This exercise has two versions, and requires some type of lift for the toes and heels. A 2X4 board works well. If you don't have a lift, you can perform these exercises with your feet flat on the floor.

STEP 1: Place your heels on the board, feet together, and with a small diameter foam roll, or a rolled up bath towel between your knees.

You can use anything that is about one inch thick to stand on

If you don't have a foam roll handy, roll up a bath towel



STEP 2: Reach over your head with both hands – reach as high as you can, and try to feel a small stretch in your abdominals.

This position may be awkward, but try to keep your feet together when you are reaching up



STEP 3: Bend over and place your palms flat on the floor in front of your feet. Bend your knees as much as you need to in order to get your palms flat. Your chest and thighs should be very close together.



STEP 4: Keep your palms flat and lift your hips, straightening out your knees. You do not have to get your knees straight. Just lift until you feel a stretch.

Remember to keep your palms flat and your chest and thighs close together.



STEP 5: Stand back up and reach over your head to start the stretch again

Do 5 repetitions with your heels up, then 5 repetitions with your toes up on the board.

You only need to hold the stretch for about 1-2 seconds.



Standing Hamstring Stretch

Another way to stretch the hamstrings functionally is the standing hamstring stretch. This one is a little different position than the Active Hamstring Stretch.

STEP 1: Place your right leg onto a chair or other object about the height of your knee or waist. Bend over and wrap your arms around your thigh, bringing your chest as close as you can.

Make sure that you keep your back flat and hug your thigh with this stretch



STEP 2: Slowly straighten your right knee out until you feel a stretch in your hamstrings. Make sure that you keep your chest and thigh together, and your back flat.



Hold for 2-3 seconds, return to the starting position and repeat 5 times each side

Supine Piriformis Stretch

If you have hip pain, or suffer from PFS, this is a great stretch for you.

This stretch will work on the lateral hip muscles, an area of tightness for many people.

STEP 1: Lie on your back with your knees bent to 90 degrees.

STEP 2: Cross your right leg over your left, so that your right ankle is on your left thigh, just above your knee.



STEP 3: Reach both hands around your left thigh and then pull it as far towards your chest as you can. You should feel a stretch along the outside of your right hip and buttocks.



Hold for 3-5 seconds, and then switch legs. Do 5 repetitions on each leg.

Kneeling Hip Flexor Stretch

Hip flexor tightness will affect your hip mobility, and can lead to low back pain, PFS, or other problems.

Use a broomstick or small diameter PVC pipe to hold onto for balance.

The hip flexors are often very tight in athletes. Also in people who have to sit at a desk for long hours during the day, or in the car traveling.

STEP 1: Kneel on your left knee with your left foot up on the toes. Place your right foot in line or just a little to the right of your left knee.



STEP 2: Keeping your low back and hips inline, lean forward until you feel a stretch in the front of your left hip and leg.



You may have to do this in front of a mirror the first few times to monitor your alignment.

Hold the stretch for 2-3 seconds, relax, and repeat. Do 5 repetitions of 2-3 seconds on each leg.

Standing Hip Flexor Stretch

The standing hip flexor stretch is another way to stretch the hip flexors.

STEP 1: Place your right leg on a chair or other object that is about knee or waist high. Your left arm goes overhead.



STEP 2: Now lean your hips towards the chair, keeping your back in alignment.



You can also reach your left arm over your head for an added stretch.

Hold for 2-3 seconds, return to the starting position and repeat 5 times on each side.

Iliotibial Band (IT Band) Stretch

Tightness of this muscle can contribute to snapping hip syndrome, and is a common problem with runners.

The iliotibial band, or IT Band, is on the outside of your hip.

STEP 1: Cross your right leg over in front of your left leg. You will place most of your weight on your left leg.



STEP 2: Reach your right hand over your head, and lean to your left side. Push your hips out towards the right, making sure to keep your upper and lower body inline.



Hold the stretch for 3-5 seconds, repeat 5 times on each side.

Summary

With just a few minutes a day, you can have a more flexible lower body. Not only will you feel better, but your mobility and range of motion will be improve. That means more quickness, power, and strength...and a better sports performance.

Flexibility is a major cause of overuse injuries, and a regular stretching program can help you to prevent acute injuries. And you only need 10 minutes a day.

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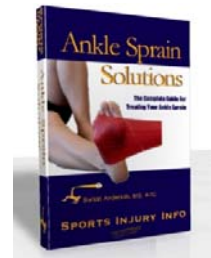
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