

Hip Stretches and Exercises

The hip complex contains many structures and muscles that can be pain generators if not properly taken care of. A balance of strength and flexibility is required for optimal performance.

Strengthening the muscles that support the hip stabilizes and takes pressure off of the joint and can relieve joint pains. Stronger muscles also help prevent injury and relieve pain.

Stretching the muscles is important for maintaining flexibility and full joint range of motion. Loss of range of motion can lead to faster onset of arthritis and other degenerative changes.

The major muscles targeted include:

- Gluteus maximus, medius, and minimus (buttocks)
- Piriformis (buttocks)
- Abductors (outer thigh)
- Adductors (inner thigh)
- Tensor fascia (outer thigh)
- Hamstrings (back of thigh)

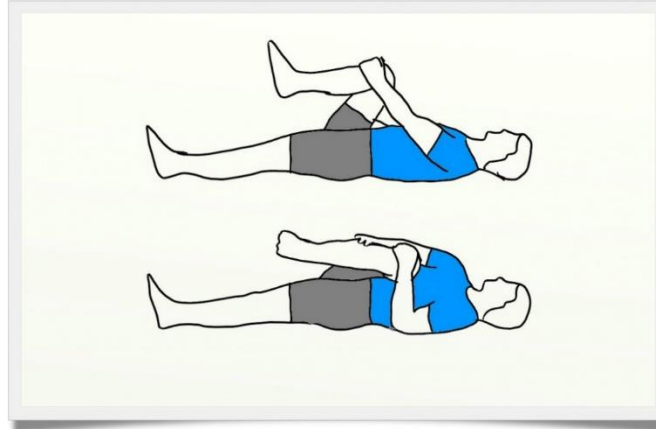
Strength – Adductors



Wall sit with ball squeeze:

Stand up against a wall, slide down and bend your knees to a 90 degree angle, keeping your knees over your ankles (pictured). Then, to work inner thighs – place a towel, medicine ball or even water bottle between your knees. Squeeze and hold for 10 seconds then repeat as long as you can hold it

Stretch – Gluteus



Supine knee to chest

Lying on your back bring your knee up towards your chest and then across your body slightly to move the stretch to your buttocks. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat for other side. Perform 2-4 sets daily.

Stretch –Piriformis



Seated Piriformis stretch

While sitting in a chair, bring your bad leg up and cross it on top of your good leg. Brace your leg with your hands and lean forward in the chair to feel a deep stretch across the buttocks. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat for other side. Perform 2-4 sets daily.

Strength: Abductors



Side-lying hip abduction:

Lay on your side with the injured leg on top and the bottom leg bent to provide support. Straighten the top leg and slowly raise it to about 45 degrees. Hold for 2-3 seconds and slowly lower it back down. Repeat 8-10 times 2-3 times a week.

Tip: Do not turn your leg to try to raise it higher. Make sure the outside of the thigh is lifted directly towards the ceiling and not at an angle.

Stretch: Tensor Fascia Latae (TFL)



Side lying TFL rolling:

Lay on your side with your elbow and place the outer thigh and hip of the side of pain onto a foam roller or tennis ball. Bend the unaffected leg and brace against ground for support. Keep the bottom leg straight and use your elbow and top leg as leverage to roll up and down. You can also roll the Iliotibial band down the outer thigh to the knee. Repeat 2-3 times a week.

Stretch: Hamstring



Seated unilateral hamstring stretch

Sit on the floor with the leg to be stretched out straight and the other bent out of the way. Lean forward at the hips and try to touch your toes to feel a stretch under the thigh. Hold stretch for 30 seconds. Repeat 2-3 times daily.

Tip: Stretch as far as you can without bending your knee.

Strength: Lower body

Bodyweight squat:





This is a compound exercise which simultaneously strengthens many muscles including the gluts, quads, hamstrings, and legs. To perform this exercise with the correct form, stand with your legs about shoulder width apart and toes facing forward. Place your weight on your heels and squat down to slightly below 90 degrees. Make sure to keep your back straight, head facing forward, and knees behind the toes. Drive through the heels to stand back up again. Repeat 8-10 times for 2-4 sets, 2-3 times a week.