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## **HIP FLEXOR/QUAD STRETCHING**

In rehab circles, you will hear references made to needing range of motion before any other muscle qualities can be considered. Personally, I do not like to isolate one muscle quality from another. However, if you lack full mobility, the joint will struggle to achieve balance, strength, coordination, etc. As a result, my program—from Range of Motion (ROM) to Exercises to Movement Patterns to Aerobic Training—is designed to achieve a full range of motion while working on multiple muscle qualities.

Motion should be beautiful. To see someone struggle to get out of a car is a painful sight. Fluidity of motion is not something that can be achieved only by Baryshnikov. It is a quality you can develop with time and awareness. Flexibility refers to the elasticity of your muscles, ligaments and tendons. As anyone with a stiff neck or tight hamstring will tell you, flexibility is key to allowing easy motion.

Flexibility and balance are two qualities commonly lost with aging. The decrease in flexibility is a physiologic process whereby we lose water from our tissues, making them drier, tighter, and more prone to injury. The only real fountain of youth is to keep moving.

Stretching should be relaxing and NOT painful. The old adage “No pain, no gain” does not apply. Stretches should be performed to the point where there is tension on the muscle, but no pain. The muscle should be relaxed and stretched slowly. Ease into the stretch and ease out of the stretch. Quick or bouncing movements are usually less effective than a slow, sustained stretch. Breathing is also a very important part of stretching that is often ignored. It seems almost natural to hold your breath when stretching, but don’t. Breathe slowly and feel the muscle tension leave on exhalation.

**Warm-up:** Get your heart rate elevated by doing some push-ups, sit-ups, or a lower extremity warm-up that does not aggravate your shins.

**Stretch:** Stretch until you feel mild tension and hold for 15-30 seconds. You are not bound to the examples we have provided, be creative and find the stretches that best suit your needs.

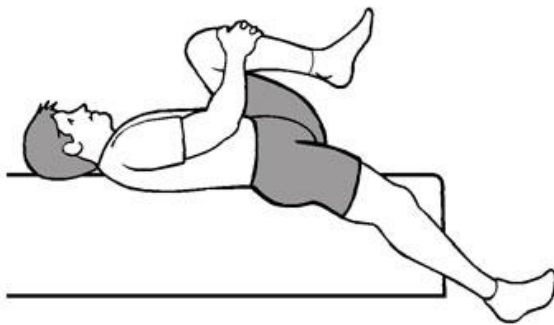
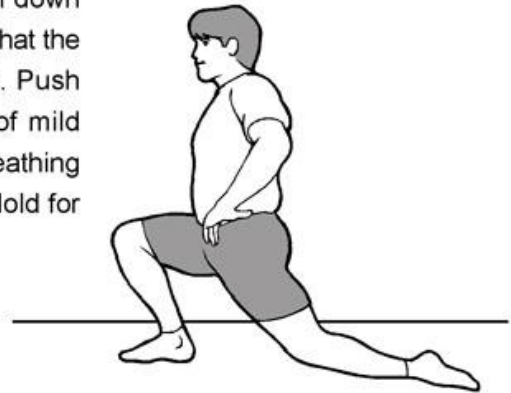
**Exercises:** See back of handout.

**Massage:** Sitting in a chair or with your legs elevated, massage the involved muscles. Work from your toes toward your heart.

**Ice & Massage:** Ice 20 minutes at a time 2-4 times a day. This is especially helpful before and after activity. A frozen bag of veggies or a gel pack is nice to use because they will conform to your leg.

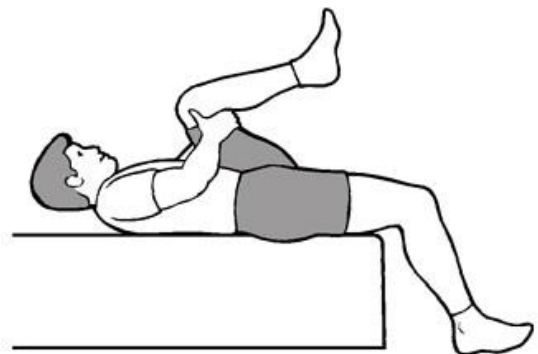
# HIP FLEXOR STRETCHES

Step forward with unaffected leg. Kneel down on back knee and have toes pointed so that the top of the foot is resting on the ground. Push hip toward the ground until a stretch of mild tension is felt. Relax, concentrate on breathing and visualize the muscle lengthening. Hold for 20-30 seconds.



Lie on your back near the edge of a table. Let one leg hang over the side of the table. Bring the opposite knee toward your chest and grasp with both hands. Gradually draw your knee into your chest until mild tension is felt in the hanging hip. Hold for 20-30 seconds.

Lie on your back with both legs hanging off the end of a table. Raise one knee toward your chest and interlock hands behind your knee. Gradually draw your knee into your chest until mild tension is felt. Relax and hold for 20-30 seconds.



Stand upright and use a wall for balance. Raise one foot toward the buttocks and grasp with your hand. Slowly draw heel toward and push knee backwards until mild tension is felt. Relax and hold for 20-30 seconds.

