

# HEALTHY MOVES

## Stretch of the Month

### Hamstrings Muscle Stretch

#### Why stretch the Hams

The muscles on the back of the thigh are called the hamstring muscles, commonly referred to as the hams. They are responsible for bending at the knee. Hamstring tears are often the reason you see sprinters pulling up in a race.

The hamstrings attach to the part of the pelvic bone which you sit on. When tight they can tilt the pelvis backward. This can adversely affect the mechanics of the back and pelvis. Like the quadriceps, tight hams are often contributing factors of low back pain as well as knee pain.

#### How to Stretch

- Lie on your back, in front of a door jamb ( the corner of a wall or bookcase will work as well).
- Place one leg through the doorway.
- The leg you are stretching rests vertically with your heel on the wall or door jamb.
- Keep both buttocks on the floor.
- Your buttocks should be as close to the wall as is comfortable. ( As you become more flexible you can get closer to the wall. )
- Place a folded towel, about as thick and as wide as your hand, supporting the small of your back.
- Straighten the knee as far as is comfortable.



It is imperative to maintain a comfortable and neutral spine while stretching. For this reason I find stretching the hamstrings with the back supported by the floor to be a superior stretch.

You should feel only a comfortable stretch in the back of your thigh or behind the knee.

- Hold the stretch for 20 to 30 seconds
- Repeat same for other side
- Stretch each side 3 times

#### If you are unable to stretch on the floor.

Stand facing a chair, bench, or step stool. Place one foot on the chair. Extend the knee. Maintain an upright posture.



Always have a chair or wall to your side so you can place one hand on it for balance.

Place a pillow or book on the chair to lift your foot, if you need more stretch.

A common error is to lean forward, bending the spine and sometimes twisting the spine as one leans forward. This places unwanted stress on the spine.

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#### Disclaimer:

Suggestions made in this publication are no substitute for medical advice. If you have any pain or difficulty performing this stretch seek advice from your appropriate health professional.