



MUSCLE SPRAIN: REHAB EXERCISES AND COMMON MYTHS

Signs and Symptoms

Hamstring Strain - Immediate sharp pain in the back of the thigh that can often occur when sprinting. It is not uncommon for bruising and swelling to appear behind the knee, which can be very disabling in the first few days.

Quadriceps Strain – Immediate sharp pain in the front of your thigh that occurs while kicking or after kicking a ball. It is not uncommon for swelling and bruising in your thigh to occur, and it can affect walking and loading on the injured leg.

Important

It is important to ice your leg soon after your injury to prevent additional swelling and discomfort. If you have immediate questions about your injury, please contact me directly either via email at kelly@rehabunited.com or call our office at (206) 524-4977.

Myth #1: Keep the Leg Immobile and Stay Off of It

Limiting motion and movement can be one of the worse things you can do for an acute injury. By limiting motion in the injured area, you increase swelling and pooling of blood in the injured area. Increased swelling can lead to muscle dysfunction and weakness delaying your recovery from the muscle strain.

Myth #2: The R.I.C.E Method Is Best for Muscle Sprains

As mentioned above, only keeping the leg elevated and iced may make it feel better, but it will only stiffen up the tissue more and hinder quick recovery. An active range of motion and movement is better early on since our muscles act as pumps to help flush the swelling out. You can continue to use ice for pain relief for the first 7-10 days as needed, but staying in motion is KEY. Additionally, you can look to add heat to your injured area prior to doing your stretches or activity to help loosen up tight and stiff tendons and muscles.

Myth #3: I Shouldn't Stretch My Muscle Strain

It's easy to think that because my muscle strain is painful, I shouldn't stretch the injured area. This is false. "Motion is Lotion" and "Movement is Medicine" is important to find gentle stretches for your muscle strain, helping you regain lost motion and reduce scar tissue build-up in the injured area. Regaining lost motion is a great first step to recover from your injury.

Early Rehab Exercises

1. Stretch

Quadricep Strain – Kneeling Quad:

Bend the knee and grab the ankle. Pull knee into flexion while extending hip back. This can also be performed on a table and chair and should be done slowly so as not to re-injure the strained tissue. Make sure you are bringing the knee back to stretch the muscle at the knee and hip. Hold 5-30 second reps for a total of a minute.

Watch Video: [See the Exercise Demonstration Here](#)

Hamstring Strain – Hamstring Stretch:

Place your heel onto a chair in the doorway. While keeping the front leg straight, lean your trunk forward until a stretch is felt under your leg (hamstring). Move your trunk forward and backward to drive in and out of the stretch in the sagittal plane. While keeping the front leg straight on the chair, sway your hips side to side in the frontal plane. Lastly, while the front leg is straight on the chair, alternate reaching your hands across the leg in a transverse plane drive. Hold each position for 20-30 seconds and repeat 2-3 times in each position.

Watch Video: [See the Exercise Demonstration Here](#)

2. Foam Roll

Quadricep Strain – Foam Roll Your Quads:

Start on your stomach with one shin and your forearms on the floor for support and with a foam roller under the front of your thigh. Roll the foam along the front of your thigh, stopping at your knee. Foam roll each quad for 90 seconds to 2 minutes each. Doing this will help to loosen up those tight muscles around your knees.

Watch Video: [See the Exercise Demonstration Here](#)

Hamstring Strain – Foam Roll Your Hamstrings:

Begin sitting with a foam roller under the back of your thigh, your hands on the floor. Lift yourself up onto your hands and roll the foam forward and backward along the back of your leg.

Watch Video: [See the Exercise Demonstration Here](#)

3. Strengthen Your Injured Area

Lunge Matrix: Begin standing shoulder-width apart

Complete the lunge matrix in 3 ways –

- Lunge forward and return for each leg
- Lunge side to side
- Lunge back diagonal returning to your starting position between each exercise

Use a dowel, ball, or bilateral hands to reach different heights to make the exercises more difficult. Let the front knee drive over the toe, but keep the foot flat on the ground.

Watch Video: [See the Exercise Demonstration Here](#)

4. See a Physical Therapist / Movement Specialist!

If you are suffering from a muscle strain and it is affecting your ability to participate in your sport it is important to be seen by a physical therapist. A physical therapist is a movement expert and is trained in

treating athletes that suffer from all types of pain and injuries. A physical therapist can help get to the root cause of your pain and prescribe a more individualized program for your recovery.

Schedule A Visit: [Request an Appointment Here](#)