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Proximal Hamstring Tendinopathy

Physiotherapy Department



The Hamstrings

There are three hamstrings located at the back of the thigh. All muscles have tendons that attach muscle to bone. The proximal hamstring tendons connect the three hamstring muscles to the 'sit' bone (ischial tuberosity) at the bottom of the pelvis.

Proximal Hamstring Tendinopathy

Pain can be felt deep into the buttock and high up on the back of your leg where the hamstrings attach into.

How does the pain develop?

The hamstrings are responsible for bending the knee and helping to control knee and hip extension. The most common cause of pain is an overuse injury with activities that include running, jumping and kicking.

Pain is commonly aggravated by running at faster speeds and uphill, long periods of sitting or driving (particularly on hard surfaces) and overstretching of the hamstrings. Pain may be delayed 24-48 hours after exercise.

What can I do to help?

Exercise is the main form of treatment and is the most evidence based.

Stage 3 – returning to normal activity

- Once your pain is significantly reduced and you can complete the above exercises without pain, you can begin to return to your normal activities.
- Try not to increase your training load or volume by more than 10% at a time.
- Remember you won't be able to return to your previous level before injury straight away. Take your time, rest or modify activity when you need to making sure your pain does not increase above 3/10 during or after exercise.

All exercise images provided with consent of www.physiotec.ca

Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty.

If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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Version: 1

Published: Sep 2018

Review: Sep 2020

Single leg Romanian Dead Lift (RDL)



Stand on one leg, chest out and shoulders back. Hinge at the hips, keeping your spine neutral, while reaching forward with both arms. Hinge as far as possible until you feel a tension in your hamstrings of the support leg.

Return to the standing position using your glutes and hamstrings to lift you up.

Bulgarian Split Squat

Put the back foot on a bench or chair of your unaffected leg. Bring the back knee toward the ground to initiate the movement and lower as much as you can without the lower back going in extension.

Keep the torso upright at all time – do not lean forwards.



You should complete the above exercises until fatigue up to 15 repetitions. Then repeat for 2-3 sets every other day. You can progress the exercises by increasing your resistance, for example, holding dumbbells.

Early Management

- Avoid aggravating factors
- Reduce your training load – make sure your training is not causing any pain afterwards; otherwise you may be overdoing it. Make sure your pain is no more than 5/10 on a self-rating pain scale (with 0 being no pain and 10 maximum pain)
- It is important that you keep active. You can try different types of exercise e.g. swimming
- Sitting on hard chairs can also aggravate your pain. You may find sitting on a cushion more comfortable.
- Ice – you may find it beneficial to ice (do not apply directly to skin) over the hamstring attachment area for 10-15 mins.
- Anti-inflammatories – try speaking to your pharmacist or GP

What can physiotherapy do for me?

It is important that you follow a graded exercise programme with progressive loading to allow your tendons to be able to cope better. Exercises must be completed regularly.

How long will it take for me to get better?

Tendinopathies can take several months to get better. That is why early management is very important. It may take 6-9 months for your symptoms to fully resolve.

Exercises – Stage 1



Buttock Squeeze

Lay down on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Without any actual movement, squeeze your buttocks as hard as you can. Hold for 45 seconds and repeat 5 times.

Heel Dig



Sit with your leg slightly bent and your heel in contact with the floor. Push your heel into the floor feeling your hamstrings contract. Relax and repeat at different angles of knee flexion.

Hold for 45 seconds and repeat 5 times.

Hip flexor stretch

With your feet hip width apart and pointing forward, bring one leg back to get the knee on the ground. You should feel a stretch in front of your hip/thigh. Keep your back straight during the stretch and push your hips slightly forward by squeezing the glutes. You can use a cushion to kneel on to make this more comfortable. Hold this stretch for 30 seconds.



Do not move onto the next stage until the exercises above are pain free.

Stage 2

Hamstring Bridge

Start with your feet on a chair with your knees and hips bent 90°. Do a full bridge to allow your body to be straight. Lower under control.



You can progress this to one leg as you feel able.