

Notes: You should consult a healthcare provider before starting any of these exercises as they may not be right for you. You should not feel pain during or after completing the exercises. Remember, you can consult me via Skype for a diagnosis of your injuries and tailored treatment plans at sports-injury-physio.com

1- Hip flexor/ Quad stretch



Starting position: Half kneel with your one knee on a pillow and your other leg out in front of you. Hold on to something for balance if needed.

Movement: A. Push your hip forward, but at the same time tilt your pelvis backwards. This is important – if you allow your pelvis to tilt forward, the stretch will not be as effective. This will mainly stretch the iliopsoas muscle, but if you're very tight you may have to spend time on this part first and then add in part B.

B. Once you can easily achieve part A, maintain that position and grab hold of your foot. You may have to loop a belt or towel around your foot if you are very stiff.

Check that: Your pelvis remains tilted backwards throughout the stretch. Remember, strong sustained stretches switches muscles off, so these should be followed by dynamic movements if you're doing them shortly before doing sport.

Aim: Hold the stretch for 30sec and repeat 3 times on each leg.

2- Foam rolling quads (1 leg)



Place your foam roller on the floor and lie on your stomach with the front of one thigh over the foam roller and the other leg on the floor for support. Roll the entire front of the thigh from the top of the hip to the top of the knee cap in an up and down motion. Then turn your body so that you can also roll the outside of the quads.

2 minutes per leg

3- Start with: Free squat



Starting position: Standing with feet pointing forwards and spaced hip distance apart.

Movement: Squat down by pushing your bottom out to the back (pretend you want to sit on a chair) and bending your knees. Hold the position for 3 seconds and return to standing upright.

Check that: Your feet stays in a good neutral position. Your knees should move in line with your second toe. Your bottom sticks far out to the back.

Dosage: Start with whatever your knee allows you to do but you should aim to get up to 3 sets of 12 repetitions over time. Rest 2 minutes between the sets.

Once you can easily achieve this progress by replacing it with the single leg squat with wall support.

4- Single leg sit-stand-sit



Purpose: This exercise is a step up from the one above and the unstable position makes all your muscles and control systems work a lot harder. It's a great exercise to strengthen your glute med, glute max, quads and position sense.

Starting position: Choose a chair that you can manage to get up from using only one leg. Your aim should be to use a chair that places your knee in 90 degrees flexion, but if this is too hard use a higher surface. I usually place some pillows on the chair to make it easier. Sit on the edge of a chair with your one leg on the floor and the other one in the air. Your hands can either be in your sides or out in front of you.

Movement: Slowly stand up from sitting, using only one leg. Make sure that your pelvis stays level and your knee moves in line with the middle of your foot. Then slowly sit down again.

Check that: Your pelvis and knee stays aligned. If you find that you "plonk" down instead of slowly lowering yourself down, you may have to use a higher chair to start with.

Aim: Test how many you can do with good form from 90 degrees knee flexion. Your aim should be to get to 22 with no wobbling and keeping your pelvis and knee aligned. I can only manage 8 with rather poor form so I should work on the exercise single leg squat with support before doing these. Retest this every 4 weeks to check on your progress. Start strengthening it by doing sets of 8 reps until fatigue. Rest at least 1 to 2 minutes between sets.

5- Leg press



Make sure that your lower back stays flat against the support.
Your feet should be hip distance apart and your knees should move in line with the middle of your foot.
Play around with the position of your feet if your knees hurt.
Do not allow your hips to flex too deep if your lower back troubles you.

Once you are confident in using the machine and have built up a good base strength, you should try and it using one leg only - you will have to reduce the weight a lot when you make the transition to single leg exercises.