
Notes: NB: These exercises may not be right for you and you should check with your healthcare provider before trying them. Remember, you can consult me via Skype for a diagnosis of any injuries or a bespoke treatment plan.

1- Hip flexor/ Quad stretch



The main hip flexor muscles are the iliopsoas and rectus femoris. You should stretch both of these.

Purpose: It should be clear from the discussion above that this is extremely important. You will activate your glute max much better if your hip flexors aren't tight.

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 muscles, 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 not be done immediately before you do sport.

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

2- Double Leg Bridge



I prefer to do the bridge with my feet on a chair. It allows the glutes to work through a much larger range and my patients don't seem to strain their backs as easily as when they do it with their feet on the floor.

Starting position: Lie on your back with your heels on a chair. Make sure that your bottom is close to the chair – you are looking for a 90 degree angle in your knees. The straighter your knees, the more it becomes a hamstring exercise and that's not our goal for now.

Movement: Activate your pelvic floor and deep abdominals by squeezing as if you don't want to wee or fart. Keep them activated and lift your bottom into the air so that your body forms a straight line. Once at the top, you should squeeze your buttocks and make sure that you don't feel any strain in your lower back. If you do feel strain in your lower back, make sure that you are squeezing your stomach and glutes and not trying to just arch your back.

Check that: You don't feel any strain in your lower back. If your hamstrings cramp, move your bottom closer to the chair.

Aim: Hold the position for 10sec. Rest 10 sec. Repeat 10 times. Build up to 4 reps of 30sec holds.

3- Progress to: Single leg bridge



Starting position: Lie on your back with your one heel on a chair and your other leg bent up into your stomach. Make sure that your bottom is close to the chair – you are looking for a 90 degree angle in your knees.

Movement: Activate your pelvic floor and deep abdominals by squeezing as if you don't want to wee or fart. Keep them activated and lift your bottom into the air so that your body forms a straight line. Make sure that your pelvis is level! Once at the top, you should squeeze your buttocks and make sure that you don't feel any strain in your lower back. If you do feel strain in your lower back, make sure that you are squeezing your stomach and glutes and not trying to just arch your back.

Check that: Your pelvis should remain level throughout the exercise. You should not feel any strain in your lower back. If your hamstrings cramp, move your bottom closer to the chair.

Aim: Build up to 3 sets of 10 slowly reps on each leg.

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.