

Strong and Stable Hips

By Lisa Guadamuz PFT, RMT

The hip is a very complex joint comprised of many overlapping muscles that create both movement as well as stability. Injuries to the hip can arise from overuse, asymmetry and trauma i.e. falls. There are exercises to effectively strengthen and stabilize the muscles around your hip.

General Key points:

- If the exercise HURTS then STOP. If pain is new or severe then see your physician.
- Hold stretches for a minimum of 15 seconds or until you feel a reduction in the stress of the stretch.
- When Strengthening always begin with isometric/static contraction until you can feel the muscle getting stronger, doing the proper movement.
- Static exercises are to be held for 5-20 sec repetitions x 2-3 sets. Then progress to dynamic movements – 8-12 repetitions x 2 sets
- Always keep movements within a pain free range of motion when strengthening.
- Range of motion is maintained or increased through dynamic stretching prior to exercise or static stretching after strengthening

Exercises:

Side Leg Raise: Stand tall beside chair or wall. Without moving your torso or hips, lift your leg out to the side and slightly behind you.

Posterior Leg Movement: Stand tall beside a chair or wall. Put weight on 1 foot, without moving your torso, squeeze the Gluteal muscle on the other hip.

Semi Squat: Stand tall beside a chair or wall. With feet and knees hip width or wider, bend knees and push hips back like you were going to sit in a chair; only bend about 45 degrees. You can hang onto a counter for added stability until your hips get stronger.

Slide Backs: Stand tall beside chair or wall. Slide 1 foot back along the floor until front knee slightly bends. Keeping hips square and torso tall, slide foot forward until at start position.

One Leg Stance: Stand by a wall for safety.

Level 1 - back toe on floor, Level 2 - back knee bent and foot off floor, Level 3 - front knee bent with foot off floor

Supine Leg Adduction: Lay on back with feet off floor and knees over torso. Try to straighten your knees but if back hurts - bend knees. Slightly open your hips to the side, then bring back to centre. Can be done 1 at a time or both together.

Stretch Back - Mad Cat Pose: On hands and knees arc spine upwards, drop head forward and tilt tail bone down between legs

Stretch Glutes: 1. Lay on back with legs straight, rotate entire leg inwards
2. Lay on back with knees bent, rest one ankle on opposite knee, move support foot out wide, gently pull knee (that is elevated) towards opposite shoulder

Stretch Hips: lunge with back knee on floor, let hip gently glide forward and down towards the floor. Keep torso upright

Low Back Stretch: Standing beside a wall - cross outside foot in front of inside foot, push outside hip out to side, reach same-side arm up slightly in front of body

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