

Advice On Hamstring Injuries

Hamstring muscles begin from the top i.e. the pelvis and extend upto the lower leg on the back of the human body. Injury to this muscle can vary from being a small strain to a major muscle rupture. Hamstring injury is normally caused during exercise or running motion and is evidenced by a sudden, sharp pain on the back of the thigh that stops all movement then and there. Severe pain and swelling is evident.

The hamstring injury usually results in locking your leg knee down and bending may be rendered impossible beyond 40 degrees. Make sure that the athlete or sports person has a medical 'all-clear' before carrying out the exercises. This exercise is meant to relieve your hamstring injury and strengthen the muscle to its past glory.

Causes: A Hamstring injury can be caused due to

? Poor flexibility

? Shortage of strength in the muscle

? Muscular imbalance

? Differences in lengths of legs OR

? Poor warm up procedures

Treatments: Hamstring injuries generally need rest. In serious cases, a rest of 2-3 weeks is advised with cold ice compression and leg elevation. After the pain and swelling caused due to the hamstring injury subsides, a stretching regimen is recommended to rebuild damaged muscle. Make sure you consult a therapist or a doctor before you embark on any exercise.

Recommended Exercise (Bicycle leg swing): Bicycle leg swing is a very good exercise to overcome a hamstring injury and strengthen the hamstring muscle. To do this:

? Stand on your left leg with the total weight on it (you could take support with your right hand by placing it against a wall or any fixed structure).

? Slowly raise your right leg from your hip to the knee, so that it becomes perpendicular to your body (90 degree lift). ? Once your thigh is parallel to the ground, begin extending your knee until your leg is straight.

? Now start swinging your right leg in a slow arc downwards and to the back of your body and back again. Once this movement is coordinated slowly, it will simulate the slow stride action.

? Once you can do this at the rate of 75-80 swings per minute, do it in sets of two with 20-25 repetitions each for each leg.

? Fasten the pace with time. After you become comfortable with the exercise, try to do the exercise by restraining your ankle with rubber tubing at knee level in front of you. This will facilitate in strengthening your leg. Tighten the restraint over a period of time to build strength.

Always perform this exercise after a little warm up by jogging or cycling.

Prevention of Hamstring Injury:

To prevent a hamstring injury, one needs to take certain precautions:

Warm up: Always warm up thoroughly. Hamstring is the most important muscle that needs warm up prior to heavy exercise.

Stretching: Once you finish the exercise or work outs always remember to stretch out to prevent any possible hamstring injury.

Hurry: Never try to do too much in too little time.

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About the Author

Julian Hall is the director of <http://www.claimsmastergroup.com> .The personal injury, accident claim, no win no fee, road traffic accidents specialists.
Call 08000 71 22 71 for advice.