



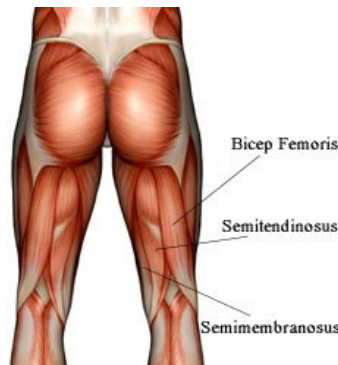
It's All In The Hips WORKING ON THE TIGHT HIP MUSCLES

Stan Urban, 48, a competitive cyclist, turned to massage & stretching three years ago when he began to experience lower back pain, a very common ailment among cyclists, who spend the majority of their time hunched forward over the bike. Though Urban thought his problem centered in his lower back, his coach, Dario Fredrick, had a different theory. Shortened hamstring muscles along the backs of Urban's legs coupled with tight hip flexors along the front of his thighs, as well as tight groin muscles and hip rotators, were preventing him from riding his bike in the proper form.

Essentially his pelvis was locked into position by his tight muscles, forcing him to bend forward from his spine, rounding his back on the bike. Fredrick, an Iyengar Yoga teacher and former elite cyclist in San Anselmo, California, suggested a series of

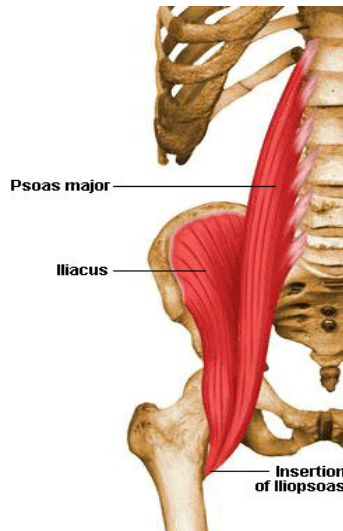
stretches that emphasized lengthening and relaxing the front, back, and sides of the hips. Today Urban is cycling pain free, and his performance on the bike has improved as well. "The stress on my body from competitive cycling really demanded some extra attention to flexibility, and the stretches have helped me a lot," states Urban.

Cyclists are not the only athletes who can benefit from stretches that lengthen and strengthen the muscles attached to the hips and pelvis. Runners, swimmers, and skiers, often experience the same tightened muscle groups from repeatedly using one set of muscles. These muscles include the following:



Hamstring Complex

Hamstrings. A group of muscles along the backs of the thighs, hamstrings restrict the extension of the hips when tight, which forces you



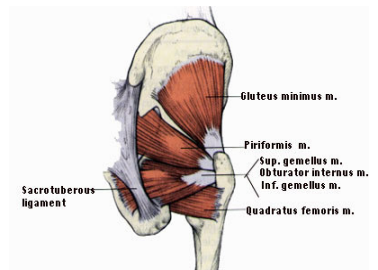
Hip Flexors

to round your back as you bend forward as opposed to folding forward from the hips.

Hip Flexors. The psoas and iliacus (collectively called the iliopsoas) attach your thighbone to your lower spine and ilium bones (top of the pelvis). When they tighten, these muscles can pull the top of your pelvis forward, compress the back of your lumbar (overly arching your lower spine), or draw the tops of your

thighbones forward of and tightly into the hip sockets.

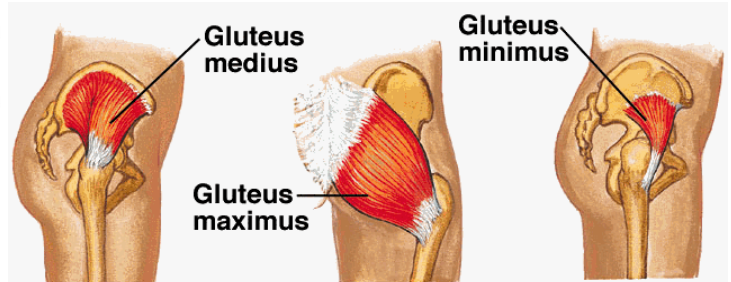
Hip Rotators. Along the sides and backs of your hip, the piriformis (a small muscle that attaches the back of



Deep Lateral Hip Rotators

the sacrum to the thighbone) and gluteus maximus (a much larger muscle that connects the back of the sacrum and pelvis to the upper thighs) roll your femurs outward. When they are tight, they will force you to stand with your toes pointed outward, putting pressure on your inner knees and also restricting your lower back by forcing an increase in lumbar curvature.

To tell if your hips are tight, stand and look at your feet. If your toes naturally turn out,



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Loosen-Up Your Tight Hamstrings

Chronically short and tight hamstrings are an endemic in our community of quad dominant activities, such as skiing, biking, hiking. Tight hamstrings not only leave you more susceptible to pulled muscles but can lead to low back, hip and knee pain.

What are the Hamstrings?

The Hamstrings consist of three separate muscles:

- 1) the Biceps Femoris
- 2) Semitendinosus; and
- 3) Semimembranosus.



To the regular guy in the street, the Hamstrings are the muscles at the back of your leg/thigh. They start just underneath the Glutes (Gluteus Maximus) on the pelvis and attach on the bone of the lower leg (tibia). The hamstrings naturally have a higher distribution of fast twitch fibers than other muscle groups making them perfect for aiding locomotion.

Why are my hamstrings so tight?

There could be a number of reasons for this:

- 1) *You were born that way.*
Yep, it sucks, but some

people are born with naturally short hamstrings, whilst others are not.

- 2) *You don't stretch.*
You're active, play sport, and don't take the time to stretch properly. Your hamstrings respond in the only way they know how – tightening up.
- 3) *You work in an office or job where there is prolonged sitting.* This sitting position holds the hamstrings in a contracted state.
- 4) *Weakness or instability from another part of your body.* If you have weak lower-abdominal muscles and/or weak lower-back muscles, the hamstrings will tighten to compensate.

Why should I be concerned about tight hamstrings?

-Tight muscles are more vulnerable to tearing.

-Short hamstrings cause the hips and pelvis to rotate backward, leading to changes in the biomechanics of the spines resulting in back problems.

-You're more susceptible to knee injury. One of the primary functions of the hamstrings are to slow down extension of the knee, like when you are tossed over the handlebars when skiing. Short tight muscles can not contract as strongly as relaxed flexible muscles.

-Additionally short hamstring impact your overall performance, and therefore slow you down.

What can I do to improve my hamstring flexibility?

There are a few options at your disposal, in no particular order:

- 1) *Massage* – increases blood flow to the muscles and helps loosen them up
- 2) *Strength training* – utilize specific exercises to strengthen the hamstrings themselves, and also the muscles surrounding (lower abs and lower back) and opposing (quads).
- 3) *Stretching* – above all else, make sure that following a workout, you utilize stretching exercises aimed specifically at hamstring flexibility. Here are a few suggestions:

Classic Hamstring Stretch

Place your foot on a step or chair. Keeping your knee and back straight, lean forward at your hips until you feel a stretch in the back of your thigh / knee. Hold for 30 seconds 4 times at a mild to moderate stretch pain-free.



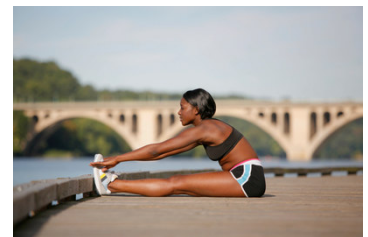
Knee Bent Hamstring Stretch

Place your foot on a bench or chair. Keep your back straight and your knee bent slightly. Lean forward at your hips until you feel a stretch in the back of your thigh. Hold for 30 seconds 4 times at a mild to moderate stretch pain-free.



Sitting Hamstring Stretch

Begin sitting with one leg in front of you and your knee straight as demonstrated. Lean forwards at your hips keeping your back as straight as possible. Move your hands towards your foot until you feel a stretch in the back of your thigh / knee. Hold for 30 seconds 4 times at a mild to moderate stretch pain-free.



Foam Rolling

Begin with a 6" round foam roller positioned at your "sit bones". Support your body weight with your arms, lifting hips and heels off the floor. Slowly roll the back of your legs over the foam roller. Hold tender areas for a minimum of 30sec then continue to roll entire length of the muscle several times.



It's All in the Hips cont.



you may need to work on opening and balancing the muscles of the hips. As your tightened hip and leg muscles pull your pelvis forward and roll your thighs outward, they put more pressure on your knees and lower back. However, problems can result in other areas of the body as well. Robert Sherman, a post-rehabilitation specialist in Bethesda, Maryland, once coached an avid kayaker with a shoulder injury. The problem actually stemmed from tight hip muscles, which were changing his body position in the kayak and inhibiting his paddling stroke.

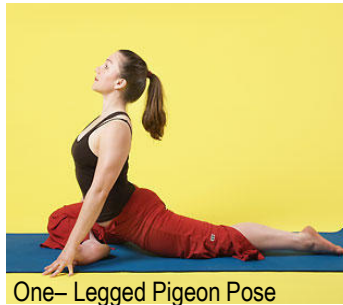
Sports that emphasize one side of the body, like golf or baseball, compound hip problems by creating imbalances between one side of the pelvis and the other. For

example, baseball requires you to lunge frequently on one leg but not the other. "One side of the body becomes tight but strong, while the other side becomes flexible but weak," says Sherman. "Without exercises to stabilize the flexible side and stretch the strong side, you develop muscle imbalances along the pelvic girdle and spine."

All of this can add up to injuries. Muscle imbalances and tight muscles along the hips often set up a cascade of problems, resulting in lower back pain for cyclists and swimmers, shoulder problems for tennis and baseball players, and knee pain for runners. Tight muscles along the hips can negatively affect performance by shortening a runner's stride, slowing down a cyclist's cadence and hindering a swimmer's ability to move through the water with efficient form.

Conversely, stretches that relax and open the hips

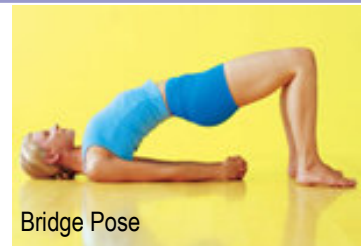
produce the opposite effect. "You'll get a greater range of motion, more fluidity to your movements, and lower your risk of injuries," says Fredrick. To free the hips, focus on stretches that include the full range of motion in the hips. That's why



One-Legged Pigeon Pose

One-Legged Pigeon Pose is one of the most often prescribed hip openers. It stretches the outer hip and groin of the forward leg and the hip flexors of the rear leg, addressing nearly all of your problems in just one stretch.

You also need to incorporate postures that will zero in on particular hip areas and promote better body awareness. For example Bridge Pose helps to



Bridge Pose

stretch the hip flexors and teaches you to *feel* the proper position of your hips as you focus on bringing your knee toward the centerline of your body.

Both Fredrick and Sherman suggest that you turn your focus inward as you practice to listen to subtle cues from your body and breath. This way you can recognize if one side of your body is tighter than the other. Then you can use the natural wisdom of your body to cue you to release and relax into various postures. And as a result, "You will achieve more body mobility, which allows you to move with less effort," says Sherman. "What was once difficult or challenging becomes easier."

By Alisa Bauman

Unhindered Movement Get Out of Your Own Way



When you find yourself facing obstacles that appear to be blocking you from your goals, it is important to try not to get discouraged. It can be easy to feel "stuck" or that "life" is creating circumstances preventing you from getting what you want. And while it is easy to look at everyone and everything outside of ourselves for the problem, perhaps even wanting to "get rid" of

the person, object, or circumstance we may feel is blocking us, sometimes the best course of action to take may be to look inside ourselves first.

It is amazing how often we can get in our own way without even being aware that we are doing so. Even though we truly want to succeed, there are many reasons why we may sometimes block our own efforts. It may be that we are afraid to succeed, so we subconsciously create circumstances to keep ourselves stuck. Or it may even be that we are afraid that we will succeed, so we block ourselves by making the achievement of our

goals more difficult than they really are. We may even approach our goals in a way that keeps creating the same unsuccessful results.

If you believe that you've been standing in your own way, you may want to take a piece of paper and record how you've done so. Write down the choices you've made that have hindered your efforts and the fears that may have prompted you to make these decisions. Take note of any thoughts and feelings that arise. It is important to be gentle and compassionate during this process. Try not to blame yourself for

getting in your own way. Remember the choices we make always are there to serve us, until it is time to let them go. When you are finished, throw the paper away while setting an intention that you are getting rid of any obstacles you've created to block yourself. You can then let yourself start again with a clean slate. Doubts and fears are going to be natural, but with this new awareness, you should be able to prevent yourself from subconsciously thwarting yourself. Besides, now that you've decided to get out of your own way, the part of you that has always wanted to succeed can now do so.



A MESSAGE EXPERIENCE THAT KEEPS YOU PERFORMING AT YOUR PEAK

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PAIN HOLDING YOU BACK?

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KEEP PERFORMING AT YOUR PEAK

«Ship to 1»

«Ship to 2»

«Ship to 3»



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Remember Your New Year Resolution? 45 Easy Ways to Lose a Pound in a Week



The Number 1 New Years Resolution is to lose weight and get in shape. To lose 1 pound in a week you

need to reduce your net calories by 500 everyday. The easiest way to do this is to cut 250 calories from your diet and burn an extra 250 through exercise.

Diet Strategies

1. Replace your morning bagel & cream cheese with an English muffin and cottage cheese.
2. Skip the large bakery muffin in favor of 1 slice of whole wheat toast topped with 1 tablespoon of peanut butter.
3. Swap your large bran muffin for 3/4 cup of bran flakes.
4. Replace eggs and cheese with scrambled egg whites.
5. Replace your 450-calorie lunch with a 200-calorie protein shake.
6. Replace large french fries with a yogurt-and-fruit parfait.
7. Modify your lunch: Skip the cheese on your salad or sandwich, substitute mustard for mayo, and replace potato chips with soy chips.
8. Have half a tuna salad sandwich instead of a whole, plus two cups of raw vegetables.
9. Skip the cheese in an omelet and a lunchtime sandwich.
10. Switch from cream soup to vegetable-based soup at lunch and dinner.
11. Switch from one cup premium to light ice cream.
12. Skip your afternoon frozen yogurt with ground nuts.
13. Resist the handful of M&M's at the receptionist's desk.
14. Cut out 1 biscotti and 1 large mocha.

15. Switch from a chai tea latte to lemon tea.
16. Have 1 ounce of soy nuts instead of 3 ounces of roasted almonds.
17. Substitute a serving of beef with shrimp or a white flaky fish like cod at two meals.
18. Leave behind one-fourth of breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
19. Have 1 cup of strawberries instead of a whole banana, and cauliflower instead of a baked potato with sour cream.
20. Replace ranch or blue cheese dressing with low-fat vinaigrette at lunch & dinner.
21. Have e a vodka & soda instead of a margarita at happy hour.

Exercise Strategies

22. Jog at a 10-minute-mile pace for 20 minutes.
23. Alternate sprinting and walking for 20 minutes.
24. Walk briskly for 30 minutes.
25. Spin for 30 minutes at a moderate pace.
26. Go for a 20-minute trail run.
26. Do 1 hour of housework.
27. Walk your dog 1 mile 2x/day
28. Do 35 minutes of power yoga.
29. Do 35 minutes of Pilates.
30. Practice tai chi for 45 minutes.
31. Perfect your swing at the driving range for 60 minutes.
32. Practice capoeira for 30 min.
33. Hit a punching bag for 30 min.
34. Go skate skiing for 15 min.
35. Shovel snow for 30 minutes.
36. Ice-skate vigorously 30 min.
37. Run up stairs for 15 minutes.
38. Jump rope for 20 minutes.
39. Do 25 min. of circuit training.
40. Dance for 40 minutes.
41. Play Frisbee for 1 hour.
42. Wash windows for 1 hour.
43. Use a pedometer & log an extra 3,600 steps.
44. Play Wii Fitness for 45 min.
45. Swim laps for 25 minutes.