

BodyRelax

- giv din krop en chance...

2. Hamstring Stretch: This is the exercise that got me ready to run the Klondike Relay. Most runners do this exercise by putting their foot on a waist-high stationary object (or a hurdle if at the track) and slowly leaning forward, reaching down the shin until they feel a stretch in the hamstring. The hamstring is the muscle that runs from just below the knee up into the buttocks. It's the muscle that lifts the lower leg and bends the knee after the quads have lifted your knees. Sprinters pull this muscle more than distance runners, but as I discovered, even straining your hamstring can limit your ability to run fast.

The best way to do this exercise, however, is not with your foot on a stool, but rather while lying on your back. This is how Pitchford taught me the hamstring stretch. Lie on your back, keeping the back flat and your eyes focused upward. Grasp the back of one thigh with both your hands and (leg bent) pull that thigh into a 90-degree position vs. the floor. Then slowly straighten your knee. After you've gotten used to doing this exercise, you can achieve a better stretch by pulling your thigh closer to your chest—but don't overdo it!

Hamstring Stretch Postions



BodyRelax

- giv din krop en chance...

Lower Body: Hamstring Stretch

Instructions:

1. Lie with your back and head flat against the floor.
2. Bend your knees and place both feet on the floor (see **photo A**).
3. Straighten your **right** leg and point your toes. Your leg should be extended about 2 inches from the floor (see **photo B**).
4. Your **left** knee remains bent, with left foot placed firmly on the floor.
5. Slowly raise your **right** leg toward the ceiling, keeping your leg straight. Slowly extend your leg until you feel a stretch (see **photo C**). You will probably feel the stretch when your leg forms a 90-degree angle with your body. Some people are more flexible and can bring the leg in past a 90-degree angle, closer to the body.
6. Feel the stretch in your **right** [hamstring](#).
7. **Inhale** (breathe in) through your nose, and **exhale** (breathe out) through your mouth, as you complete this stretch.
8. Hold stretch for a count of 8.

Repeat steps 3-8 on the opposite side, raising **left** leg to stretch **left** [hamstring](#).

BodyRelax

- giv din krop en chance...



(photo A)



(photo B)



(photo C)

BodyRelax

- giv din krop en chance...

Remember:

- **Don't** forget to keep your head and back against the floor.
- **Don't** lift your leg too quickly when preparing to stretch the hamstring.
- **Don't** hold your breath.