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UPPER LEG

Standing Quadriceps Stretch (Fig 17)

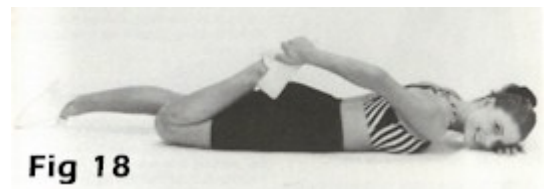


Stand tall with good posture. Hold on to the back of a chair for support and reach behind yourself with your right arm to loosely grasp your right foot. Gently ease your foot towards your buttocks, keeping your spine long and your pelvis tucked under, hips facing forward. Aim to have your knees alongside each other. You will feel the stretch along the front of the right. Repeat on the other side, breathing easily throughout. If you have difficulty performing this movement initially, try beginning the exercise with the knee of the supporting leg flexed slightly. Gradually try and straighten your support leg as the stretch progresses.

Note: It is very important in this exercise that you do not overarch the lumbar spine. The exercise is much more effective if you keep your pelvis tucked under.

Lying Quadriceps Stretch (Fig 18)

Lie face down on the floor, resting your forehead on your right hand. Press your hips firmly into the floor and bring your left foot up towards your buttocks, easing it closer to them with your right hand. You will feel the stretch along the front of the thigh. Repeat on the other side, breathing easily throughout the exercise.



There are many variations of these front-of-thigh stretches - these are by far the slimmest and safest for the Quadriceps group.

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Standing Hamstring Stretch (Fig 19 & 20)

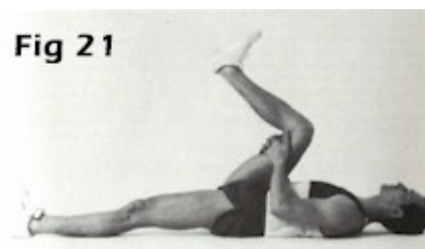


Stand tall with good posture. Now flex at the knees and hips until you can easily rest your chest on your thighs. Reach round with your arms and grasp your calves to bring your chest and thighs firmly together. From this position, try and straighten your legs as much as possible, whilst still keeping your chest firmly pressed against your thighs. When you reach your furthestmost position you will feel the stretch along the backs of your thighs. Release the stretch by flexing the knees. Breathe easily throughout the movement.



Lying Hamstring Stretch (Fig 21)

Lie flat on the floor with your knees flexed to approximately ninety degrees. Raise your left leg, grasping it loosely behind the thigh with both hands. Now ease this leg as close to your chest as possible, keeping your other leg straight along the floor. You will feel the stretch along the back of the flexed thigh. Repeat with the other leg. Breathe easily throughout. If you can perform this exercise relatively easily, then go back to your original starting position and this time try and straighten your raised leg, before easing it closer towards your chest (Fig 22). Again, you will feel the stretch along the back of the raised thigh, although this time you will experience the sensation of stretch throughout the length of the thigh, and not just towards the top, as in the previous exercise. In both exercises, keep your back flat along the length of the floor. Repeat with the other leg. Breathe easily throughout the movement.



There are several variations of the above positions. The easier lying hamstring stretch can be varied by changing the position of the lower leg as illustrated in Fig 23. Do not pull forcefully on the lower leg, however, but ease it into position. You will feel the stretch further round to outside of the back of the thigh.

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Similarly, if you can perform the exercise shown in Fig 39 with relative ease, you can combine the exercise with a movement for the inner thigh muscles as illustrated (Fig 24). Several exercise for the hamstring muscles also involve the lower back. For example the sit-and-reach test of general flexibility

is basically as assessment of hamstring and lower back mobility. It can also be used as an exercise in its own right, by reaching pine to loosely grasp your lower leg, ankles or feet according to your range of movement (Fig 25).



Seated Hamstring and Groin Stretch (Fig 26)

Sit tall with both legs fully outstretched. Flex your right knee so that the right foot rests comfortably along your left inner thigh, with the right knee as close as possible to the floor. Keeping your spine long and your shoulders down away from your ears, hinge forwards from the hips to reach towards your flexed left foot. Go as far forwards as possible, then relax your spine to reach even further forwards, holding this stretch position. You will feel the stretch along the back of the outstretched leg, and along the inside and rear of the flexed leg. Repeat with the other leg, breathing easily throughout.



Standing Hip and Thigh Stretch (Fig 27)

This exercise also stretches the muscles of the front of the thigh, specially the rectus femoris. Stand tall with good posture in front of a firm chair or stool. Raise one foot up on to the chair back easing your body towards this foot so that chest and thigh come closer together. Rest your hands loosely on the raised knee and keep your spine and back leg straight and your shoulders down away from your ears. Ease as far forwards as possible and hold your position. You will feel the stretch along the back of the thigh of the raised leg. Repeat on the other side, breathing easily throughout.



Med venlig hilsen

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