

## HAMSTRINGS STRAIN

The hamstrings are tendons (strong bands of tissue) at the back of the thigh that attach the large thigh muscle to the bone. The hamstring muscles are not used much while standing or walking, but they're very active during activities that involve bending the knee, such as running, jumping and climbing. A hamstring injury can occur if any of the tendons or muscles are stretched beyond their limit. They often occur during sudden, explosive movements, such as sprinting, lunging or jumping. But they can also occur more gradually, or during slower movements that overstretch your hamstring.



A hamstring injury is a strain or tear to the tendons or large muscles at the back of the thigh. It's a common injury in athletes and can occur in different severities.

### The 3 grades of hamstring injury are:

- **Grade 1** – a mild muscle pull or strain, it will usually cause sudden pain and tenderness at the back of your thigh but the strength of the muscle is usually not affected.
- **Grade 2** – a partial muscle tear, it is usually more painful and tender. There may also be some swelling and bruising and you may have lost some strength in the leg.
- **Grade 3** – a complete muscle tear, it will usually be very painful, tender, swollen and bruised. There may have been a “popping” sensation at the time of the injury and you will be unable to use the affected leg.

The length of time it takes to recover from a hamstring strain or tear will depend on how severe the injury is. A minor muscle pull or strain (grade 1) may take a few days or few weeks to heal, whereas it could take weeks or months to recover from a muscle tear (grade 2 or 3).

Recurring injury is common in athletes and sportsmen, as you're more likely to injure your hamstring if you've injured it before. Regularly doing stretching and strengthening exercises, and warming up before exercise, may help reduce the risk of injuring your hamstring.

### Self-management intervention:

- **Rest** – you need to avoid any physical activity for some time depending on severity of injury
- **Ice** – Apply cold packs or frozen peas wrapped in a towel for 15-20 minutes 2-3 times per day
- **Compression** – Compress the painful area with a bandage to reduce swelling and limit movement which can cause further damage.
- **Elevation** – keep your leg raised and supported on a pillow as much as possible to help reduce any swelling.

### Exercise considerations:

- Do all the exercises within pain free limits, stretch pain is common with exercises and that should ease off within 30 minutes-1 hour after having done the exercises
- Post exercise soreness is quite common and could be felt up to 48 hours after having done the exercise regime. This should get better as you continue with the regime over time
- If any exercise worsens your symptoms, stop that exercise and seek advice from your physiotherapist.