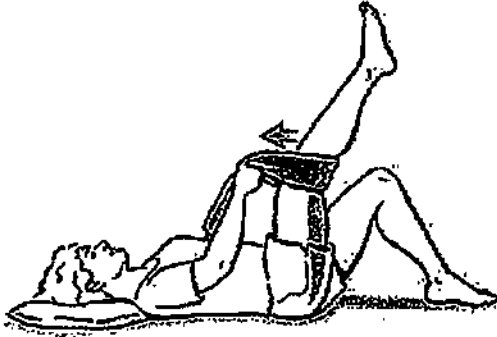


Hamstring Stretch (with Towel)



To start, lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Don't press your neck or lower back to the floor. Breathe deeply. You should feel comfortable and relaxed in this position.

Here are the steps to the hamstring stretch:

- Put a towel behind one knee or calf.
- Use the towel to pull the leg toward your chest, keeping the leg straight or slightly bent.
- Hold for 30 to 60 seconds. Then lower the leg.
- Repeat 2 times.
- Switch legs.

For your safety, check with your healthcare provider before starting an exercise program.

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Seated Hamstring Stretch



The following flexibility exercise may be suggested by your physical therapist. Stop the exercise if it causes pain and discuss it with your physical therapist or healthcare provider. During the exercise, be sure not to bounce.

Here are the steps to the seated hamstring stretch:

- Sit with one leg extended and your back straight. Bend your other leg so that the sole of your foot rests against your mid-thigh.
- Reach toward your ankle. Keep your knee, neck, and back straight.
- Feel the stretch in the back of your thigh.
- Hold for 30 to 60 seconds. Repeat 2 times.
- Repeat __ times per day.

For your safety, check with your healthcare provider before starting an exercise program.

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Leg Cramps

A muscle cramp or spasm is a strong contraction of the muscle fibers. This may occur in the foot, calf or thigh at night when the legs are elevated. If the spasm is prolonged, it can become very painful.

This may be caused by sleeping in an uncomfortable position, poor muscle tone from lack of exercise and stretching, dehydration, electrolyte imbalance, diabetes, alcohol use and certain medications.

Home Care:

1. Drink plenty of fluids during the day to prevent dehydration.
2. Stretch your legs before bedtime.
3. Eat a diet containing potassium-rich foods. These include fresh fruit—bananas, oranges, cantaloupe and honeydew melon; juices such as apple, prune, orange, grape and pineapple. Other foods highest in potassium include white, red and pinto beans, baked potatoes, raw spinach, cod, flounder, halibut, salmon and scallops.
4. Talk to your doctor about taking mineral and vitamin supplements that contain magnesium and vitamin B-12 if you are not already taking these. Other prescription medicines may also be used.

First Aid For An Acute Leg Cramp

- For mild pain, getting out of the bed and walking may help. Some persons find relief with heat (hot shower, hot bath or heating pad) and massage. Some persons feel better with a cold packs (crushed or cubed ice in a plastic bag, wrapped in a towel). Try both and use the method that feels best for 20 minutes at a time.
- For severe pain, stretching the muscle that is in spasm may quickly relieve the pain.
- When the spasm is in your foot, your toes may curl up or down. To stretch the muscle in spasm, bend your toes in the opposite direction. If the spasm pulls your toes up, bend them down. If the spasm pulls them down, bend them up.
- When the spasm is in your calf, bend the ankle so the foot points upward toward your knee.
- When the spasm is in your thigh, bend or straighten the knee and hip until you feel relief.

Hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Release. Rest for one minute. Repeat until the spasm is relieved.

Follow Up

with your doctor or this facility if you are not improving within the next week. If you notice that walking makes your pain worse and rest makes it better, see your doctor for further tests. This can be a sign of poor blood flow to the leg. If you have frequent episodes of

Return Promptly

or contact your doctor if any of the following occur:

- Fingers or toes become swollen, cold, blue, numb or tingly
- You develop weakness in the affected leg
- Pain increases and is not controlled by the above measures

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