

Specific Hamstring Stretches for Back Pain Relief-

The hamstrings run through the back of each thigh. Tightness in this muscle limits motion in the pelvis which can increase stress across the low back and corrupt correct posture. Stretching the hamstrings with these following exercises (or as part of a routine of back exercises) can gradually lengthen them and reduce the stress felt in the lower back.

Options for hamstring stretching exercises, listed from most difficult to least difficult, include:

Standing Hamstring Stretch

This is the most common technique. While standing, simply bend forward at the waist with arms hanging down and with legs relatively straight. Try to touch the toes but do not strain to do so. Stop when a stretch is felt in the hamstring.

Chair Hamstring Stretch

Less strain is applied to the back by sitting on a chair and placing the legs straight out in front on another chair. In this position, reach toward the toes. One leg at a time may be stretched

Towel Hamstring Stretch

One of the least stressful stretching techniques is to lie on the floor and pull the leg up and straighten by holding onto a towel that is wrapped behind the foot. One leg at a time may be stretched.

Wall Hamstring Stretch

Another less stressful option is to lie on the floor, with the buttocks against a wall, and place the foot up against the wall and then try to push the knee straight. One leg at a time may be stretched.

Hamstring stretching should include applying pressure to lengthen the hamstring muscle for 30-45 seconds at a time, one to two times each day. The hamstring muscles will lengthen over time, decreasing stress on the low back. Since other hamstring and back exercises may not be done everyday, stretching should not be just linked to other exercises.

In order to make stretching exercise a part of one's daily routine, it is best to stretch every morning when getting up and before going to bed. Stretching exercises are good back hygiene, just like brushing one's teeth twice a day is good dental hygiene.

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