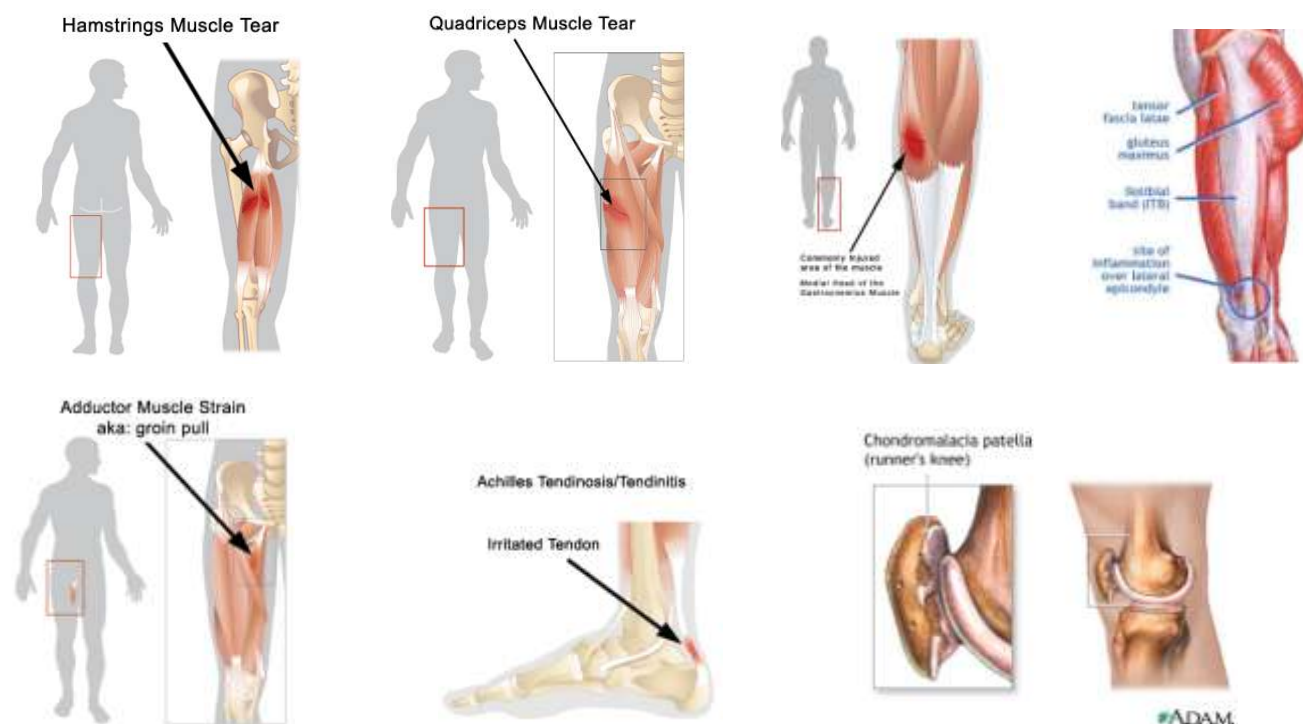


## Lower Body Stretching

To avoid the following.....



- Make sure your body is warmed up before you stretch so that you don't injure any of the areas you intend to stretch
- Stretch before and after exercise
- Stretches should be slow and relaxed (no bouncing!)
- Pre-exercise stretches – 10 seconds
- Post-exercise stretches – 30 seconds; stretch can be progressed after 10 seconds and again after 20 seconds
- Breathe normally while holding stretch
- Stretching should never be painful; if painful stop immediately or ease back on stretch so that not painful
- If on steroids for medical reasons, be careful when stretching as steroids can weaken muscles, tendons and ligaments
- If particular area of body feels tight, carry out stretch for that area three times per day

### ☐ Hamstrings Stretch (back of thigh – upper part)



- Fold a towel lengthways so that it is approx. 10 cm wide and place around foot on side to be stretched
- Lie on floor with legs outstretched, holding ends of towel in hands
- Raise leg to be stretched towards the ceiling and pull on the towel to keep the knee straight
- Stretch should be felt in the upper part of the back of the thigh

□ **Hamstrings Stretch (back of thigh – lower part)**



- Fold a towel lengthways so that it is approx. 10 cm wide and place around foot on side to be stretched
- Lie on floor with legs outstretched, holding ends of towel in hands
- Bend knee of side to be stretched and bring thigh into towards body
- Straighten out leg to be stretched towards the ceiling, but keeping thigh in against body
- Aim is to get a 90° angle between upper and lower leg
- Stretch should be felt in the lower part of the back of the thigh

□ **Standing Hamstrings Stretch (back of thigh)**



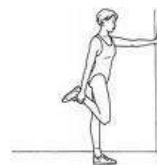
- Standing in front of a chair or small table, place leg to be stretched onto the chair or table
- Keeping the body straight and tall, lean forward until stretch is felt in back of thigh
- Make sure leg is directly in front of you as you lean in towards it

□ **Quadriceps (Quads) Stretch (front of thigh)**



- Lying face down on the floor with legs parallel to each other, bend up knee of leg to be stretched
- Place the hand of the same side around the shin just above the ankle joint to avoid straining the ankle
- Bring the thigh up towards the backside
- If it is difficult to reach the shin, place a folded towel/belt around the shin (see picture above)
- Stretch should be felt in the front of the thigh

□ **Standing Quads Stretch (front of thigh)**



- Stand arm distance out from wall with legs parallel to each other
- Bend up knee of leg to be stretched
- Place the hand of the same side around the shin just above the ankle joint
- Bring the thigh up towards the backside
- Stretch should be felt in the front of the thigh



☐ **Calf Stretch (back of lower leg)**

- Standing on a step, lower the heel of the leg being stretched down off the edge of the step
- Stretch should be felt in the back of the lower leg
- Both calves can be stretched together once you have something to hold onto



☐ **Calf Stretch (back of lower leg)**

- Standing approx. 1 foot from wall with feet hip distance apart, place hands on wall
- Step back with foot of leg to be stretched, keeping the heel in contact with the floor at all times
- Lean body inwards against wall and don't allow knee of other leg to come over the toes
- Stretch should be felt in the back of the lower leg
- Both calves can be stretched at the same time



☐ **Seated Calf Stretch (back of lower leg)**

- Fold a towel lengthways so that it is approx. 10 cm wide and place around foot on side to be stretched
- Sit on floor with legs outstretched, holding ends of towel in hands
- Pull on the towel, bringing the toes closer towards the head
- Stretch should be felt in the back of the lower leg (gastrocnemius muscle)
- Place a rolled up towel under the knee (leg now slightly bent) to stretch the soleus muscle (another calf muscle)

☐ **Psoas Stretch (lower back muscle, will be tight if you sit or drive a lot)**



- With legs shoulder distance apart, kneel down with knee on the side to be stretched on the ground
- The other bent knee should not go over the toes on that side
- Place hands on thigh not being stretched and lunge forward until feel stretch in lower abdominal/upper thigh area
- Then straighten the spine, pushing the torso into an upright position but keep leg position just achieved by lunge
- Then lunge forward slightly again, knee of opposite leg should not go over the toes
- Stretch should be felt in lower abdominal/upper thigh area

❑ **Piriformis/Gluts Stretch (butt!)**



- Lie on floor with legs outstretched
- Place hand of side to be stretched on outside of knee
- Gradually bring leg to be stretched up across to the opposite side of the body
- Place other hand on shin just above ankle and gradually pull lower leg and foot up towards opposite shoulder
- Stretch should be felt across buttock

❑ **Adductor Stretch (inner thigh)**



*One leg at a time*

- With legs shoulder distance apart, move legs outwards until feel a stretch
- Turn foot on side not being stretched 90° so that the foot is facing outwards
- Lunge away from the side to be stretched (towards the direction the opposite foot is facing), ensuring that the knee of the opposite leg should not go over the toes
- Stretch should be felt in the inner thigh



*Two legs together*

- Sit on the ground with both legs bent and soles of feet touching
- Keeping the body tall, allow the legs to drop towards the ground
- Extra pressure can be applied to the inner thighs using the hands or elbows
- Stretch should be felt in the inner thighs

❑ **Tensor Fascia Latae (TFL) Stretch (outside of thigh)**

- To do this stretch you need a chair or table to lean against
- The side to be stretched is closest to the chair or table
- Kneel down with knee on the side to be stretched on the ground
- Place arm on side to be stretched on chair or table, place other arm on thigh not being stretched
- Support body weight with arms and bring leg to be stretched underneath the body and slightly backwards
- Gently allow some body weight to return to the leg to assist the stretch
- Stretch should be felt on the outside of the thigh