

Hip Flexor Strain

Explanation of Diagnosis

A **hip flexor strain** is a **tear or overstretching** of the hip flexor muscles, primarily the **iliopsoas and rectus femoris**. It commonly occurs due to **sudden movements, overuse, excessive kicking, sprinting, or improper stretching**. Symptoms include **pain in the front of the hip, stiffness, weakness, tenderness, and discomfort** when lifting the knee or extending the leg.

Specific Work Modifications

- **Avoid prolonged sitting or standing**; alternate positions frequently.
- **Use a chair with lumbar and hip support** to prevent further strain.
- **Modify tasks** to avoid excessive walking, stair climbing, or lifting.
- **Take frequent stretch breaks** to reduce stiffness.
- **Apply ice or heat** as needed for pain relief during breaks.

Specific Activity Modifications

- **Avoid high-impact activities** like sprinting, jumping, or deep lunges.
- **Modify workouts** by switching to **low-impact exercises** like swimming, cycling, or water aerobics.
- **Warm up properly** before returning to sports.
- **Perform gentle hip stretches and strengthening exercises** to prevent re-injury.

Recommended Supplements

- **Collagen peptides (10 g daily)** - Supports tendon and muscle healing.
- **Vitamin C (500 mg daily)** - Aids in collagen synthesis.
- **Magnesium (300-400 mg daily)** - Helps with muscle relaxation and recovery.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids (1000 mg daily)** - Reduces muscle inflammation and stiffness.
- **Turmeric (500 mg twice daily)** - Provides natural anti-inflammatory benefits.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration

Diet Recommendations:

- **Muscle-repair foods**: Lean protein (chicken, fish, eggs), legumes, and Greek yogurt.
- **Anti-inflammatory foods**: Fatty fish (salmon, sardines), turmeric, berries, nuts, and leafy greens.
- **Collagen-boosting foods**: Bone broth, citrus fruits, and bell peppers.

- **Limit processed foods, sugar, and alcohol**, which can slow recovery.

Hydration Tips:

- **Drink at least 2-3 liters of water daily** to support muscle function and tissue healing.
- **Electrolytes (potassium, sodium, magnesium)** may help prevent cramps and stiffness.

Home Exercise Prescription

Perform **2-3 times daily** to reduce pain, improve flexibility, and strengthen the hip flexors:

Phase 1: Pain Relief & Mobility (Days 1-5, Reduce Swelling & Improve Movement)

1. Ice Therapy

- Apply **ice for 15-20 minutes, 3-4 times daily** to reduce swelling.

2. Seated Hip Flexor Stretch

- Sit upright, extend one leg slightly forward, and gently lean back.
- **Hold for 20-30 seconds, repeat 3 times per leg.**

3. Pelvic Tilts

- Lie on your back with knees bent, tighten your core, and flatten your lower back.
- **10 reps, 2 times daily.**

Phase 2: Strength & Stability (After 5-7 Days, Once Pain Improves)

4. Standing Hip Flexion

- Stand tall and lift one knee toward your chest, then lower.
- **10 reps per leg, 2 times daily.**

5. Glute Bridges (Hip & Core Strengthening)

- Lie on your back, bend knees, and lift hips while squeezing the glutes.
- **10 reps, 2 times daily.**

6. Clamshell Exercise (Hip Abductor Strengthening)

- Lie on your side with knees bent, lift the top knee without moving your hips.
- **10 reps per side, 2 times daily.**

Phase 3: Return to Activity (After 2-3 Weeks, If Pain-Free)

7. Lunges (If Comfortable, Avoid Deep Lunges)

- Step forward and slowly lower, avoiding excessive hip strain.

- **10 reps per leg, 2 times daily.**

8. Single-Leg Balance Exercise

- Stand on the affected leg for **15-30 seconds**, increasing time as tolerated.
- **Repeat 2-3 times per leg.**

⚠ Avoid sprinting, jumping, deep lunges, and excessive hip flexion until symptoms improve (typically 3-6 weeks).

Helpful Books

1. *"Rehab Science: How to Overcome Pain and Heal from Injury"* - Tom Walters, DPT
2. *"The Anatomy of Stretching: A Guide to Flexibility and Injury Prevention"* - Brad Walker

Click here for more orthopedic patient information.

Contact a Key West orthopedic clinic or reach out to Dr. Jason Pirozzolo.