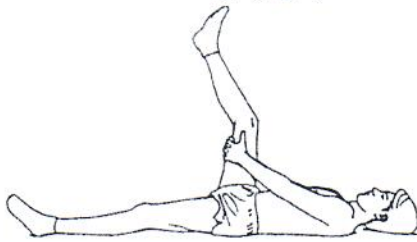


BASIC EXERCISES FOR THE LOW BACK

Perform these exercises slowly, without forcing movement. Be sure to breathe throughout the exercises. You should feel a slight stretch, however, do not move into pain. Your symptoms should not intensify as a result of doing your exercises. Perform the exercises 2-3 times daily.



Hamstrings (fig.1)



Lying on floor, pull thigh towards your chest to about 90°. Straighten your knee until a stretch is felt in back of thigh. Hold 1 minute. Repeat with opposite leg.



Single Knee to Chest (fig.2)



Pull knee in to chest until a comfortable stretch is felt in hip and lower back. Hold 15 seconds. Repeat with opposite leg. Repeat 5-10 times each leg.



Pelvic Tilt (fig.3)



Flatten back by tightening stomach and buttock muscles. Hold 10 seconds. Repeat 10 times.



Cat and Camel (fig.4)



On all fours, assume a "hump" back position by arching the back up. Hold briefly and then slowly lower the back into a sagging position. Repeat 10-15 times.



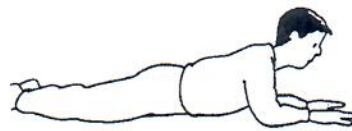
Hip Flexors (fig.5)



Lying on you back, pull one knee to the chest to keep the back flat. Allow the opposite thigh to drop over the edge of the bed. Do not allow the thigh to move away from the midline or rotate. Hold 30 seconds. Repeat 2 times each leg.



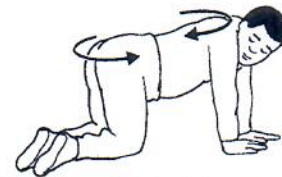
Prop Up on Elbows (fig.6)



On firm surface, lying on your stomach, prop up on your elbows. Keep pelvis, hips and legs relaxed. If propping on elbows is painful, try only lying on stomach or with a pillow under your abdomen. Hold 30 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times.



Tail Wag (fig.7)



On all fours with back maintained in neutral position, gently move hips toward rib cage to side bend trunk. Hold briefly, then alternate and do other side. Repeat 10-15 times.



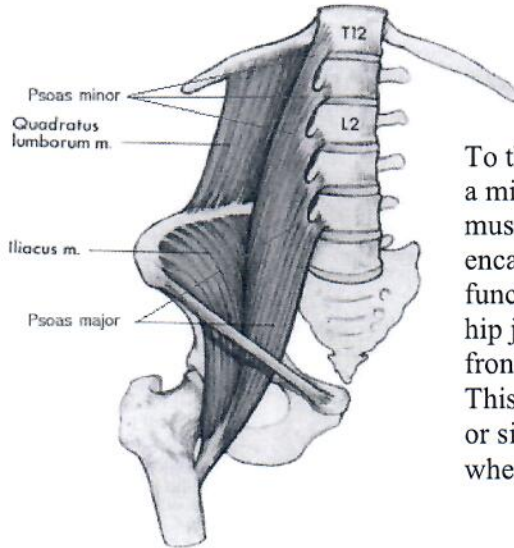
Lumbar Rotation (fig.8)



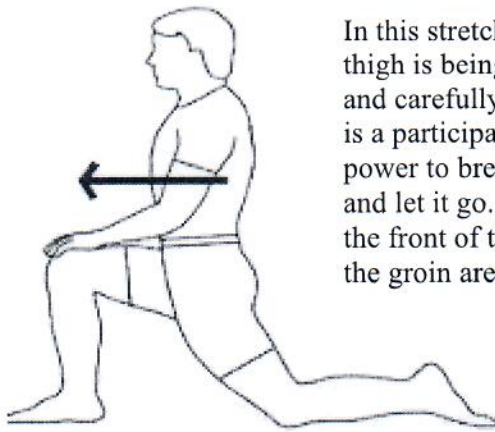
Slowly rock knees from side to side in a pain free range of motion. Allow back to rotate slightly. Repeat 10-15 times.

Iliopsoas Stretches

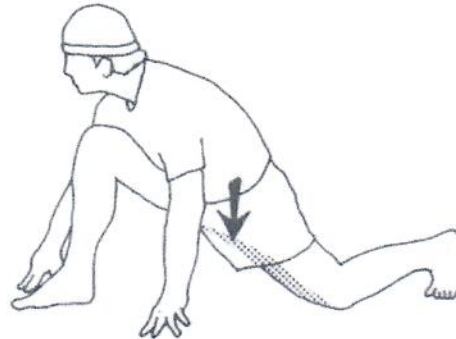
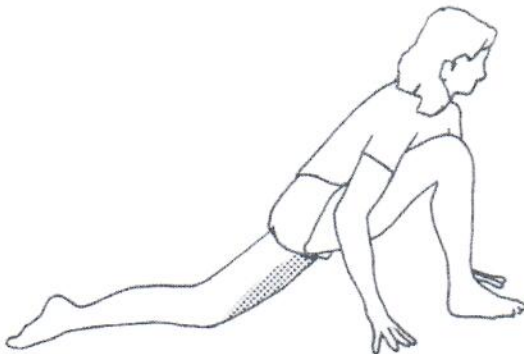
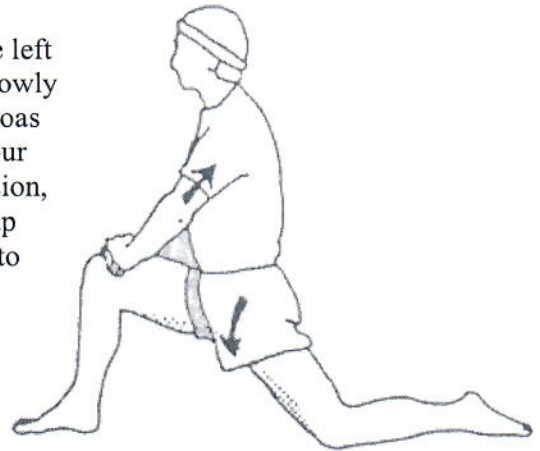
There are many ways to stretch the iliopsoas and here are a few that should only be attempted carefully and if they feel both safe and comfortable to try.



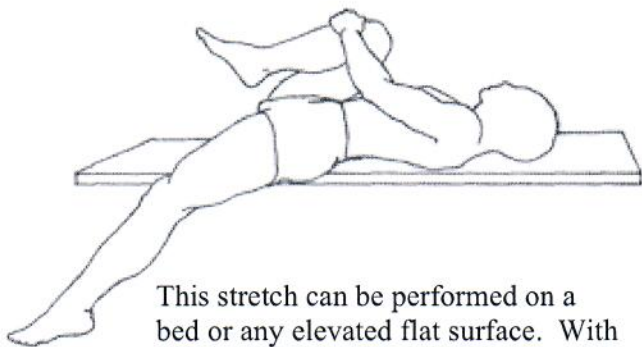
To the left is a picture of the iliopsoas muscle, which is a mixture of the iliacus, psoas major, and psoas minor muscle. These three muscles have common fascial encasements so they are considered to commonly function as one muscle. They all arise from inside the hip joint and attach to inside the pelvic floor and to the front of the vertebra and their discs in the lumbar spine. This muscle is used to either lift your leg when standing or sitting or bending forward from the waist particularly when standing or sitting.



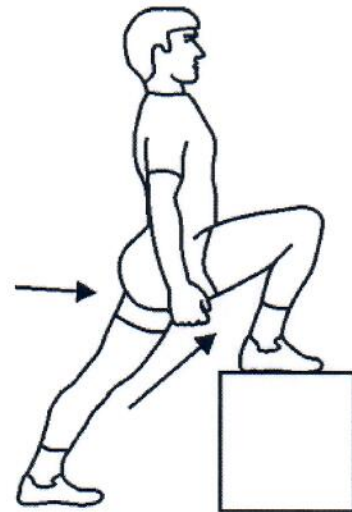
In this stretch the upper front of the left thigh is being stretched – gently, slowly and carefully. Stretching the iliopsoas is a participatory event that uses your power to breath, relax, feel the tension, and let it go. The stretch will run up the front of the thigh all the way into the groin area.



With all stretches it is best to be a bit warmed up if possible. A nice walk or some movement can be helpful. It is never about forcing a muscle to stretch but more about allowing it to let go. This starts with gentle awareness and patience. We are all different and it is important to not compare with others. Our muscles will stretch in their own time. It is all about persistence, kindness to your body, and breathing so as to release any stress or tension.



This stretch can be performed on a bed or any elevated flat surface. With this stretch the feeling is in the left leg that is off the bed. The goal is to feel a gentle stretch that is relaxing. You may need to be careful that you do not arch your low back too much or it may become uncomfortable.



This stretch can be performed by stepping up on a chair or bed. The goal is to step up to a comfortable height and feel a gentle stretch in the standing leg, in this picture the left leg. Like in the other stretches the feeling of stretch will be in the front of the thigh moving up into the inside of the pelvis and groin.

This stretch can be performed on a bed or any flat surface. The goal is to feel a comfortable stretch in the leg that is up on the bed or table, in this picture the person's right iliopsoas. The feeling will be in the upper part of the front of the leg all the way deep into the front of the pelvis. Breath, relax, hold the position as long as it is comfortable and come out of it slowly and carefully.

