

Sidelined by a Hamstring Injury?



By Dr. Jon DeGorter, Jonas Chiropractic Sports Injury Care

The powerhouse of your legs, the hamstring is a group of muscles along the back of your thigh that help in walking, jumping, running, cycling and swimming. A pulled or strained hamstring can disrupt your training plan, sidelining you for weeks if not treated right.

There are three categories of hamstring strain, depending how much damage there is to the muscle and tendon fibers.

- A grade 1 strain is when the muscle fibers are stretched but not torn.
- A grade 2 strain is if there is a partial tear of some of the muscle or tendon fibers.
- A grade 3 strain is the complete tear or rupture of the muscle or tendon.

Causes

Muscle strain can occur over time as a result of overuse injury, or may happen with a sudden specific injury. The injury can become worse if strenuous activity is attempted before the muscle has fully healed.

When a hamstring muscle is pulled, the muscle fibers are stretched abruptly, and in severe cases can actually tear. Many people hear and feel a "pop" when the muscle is torn. There can also be bruising or pain in the lower buttock.

Other causes of hamstring injury are inadequate warming up and poor stretching, muscle weakness or imbalance in muscle strength within the hamstring muscles, and muscle weakness or imbalance between the hamstrings and quadriceps. A pull or strain can be due to a recurrent injury when the muscle hasn't completely healed from previous damage. The decreased range of motion and flexibility from previous injury or from arthritis in the back, hip, or knee can contribute to a hamstring strain or pull.

Prevention

When hamstrings are tight, they tear easily. Therefore, warming up before and stretching after physical activity is important to prevent injury. Inverted hamstring and handwalks are great stretches. You can learn more about these stretches and dynamic stretches online at JonasChiropractic.com, under resources / downloads.

Strengthening the hamstrings is also a good preventative measure. Increase the intensity of your physical activity slowly — no more than a 10% increase a week.

Treatment

Many runners with a hamstring injury start to feel better within a few days, however there is an extremely high re-injury rate due to a poor rehabilitation process. Injured tissue develops abnormalities when it heals, which impairs normal function. Those adhesions and scar tissue restrict motion, reduce circulation, and inhibit nerve function.

Active Release Technique®(ART) and **Graston Technique®(GT)** break down abnormalities using direct pressure to the muscles, while flexing and extending the joints they are connected to. **ART** gets to the root cause of the injury, and substantially decreases healing time, and improves athletic performance like no other treatment can.

Don't wait to begin treatment! The longer you delay therapy, the longer recovery takes. The removal of any physical restrictions that form in the hamstrings, or other injured areas, is essential for a full recovery. **Active Release Technique** promotes faster recovery, restoration of normal tissue function, and helps prevent injuries. For the athlete, it will allow you to train better and can keep you injury free if used consistently.

The techniques and therapy provided by **Jonas Chiropractic Sports Injury Care** are natural and non-invasive and have successfully helped many athletes come back faster from injury and return to pain-free running.

Dr. Jon DeGorter is part of the Jonas Chiropractic Sports Injury Care team. Dr. Jon specializes in treating runners and triathletes. He is well versed in injury prevention and rehabilitation — keeping athletes doing what they like to do!