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## WHO IS SPORTEX CO-kinetic

We specialise in producing information for medical, health and exercise professionals on the subject of exercise, health and musculoskeletal injury. This includes subscription publications for practitioners and advice handouts for the public. All our material is written and reviewed by leading medical professionals. For more information visit [www.co-kinetic.com](http://www.co-kinetic.com) or telephone +44 (0)845 652 1906.

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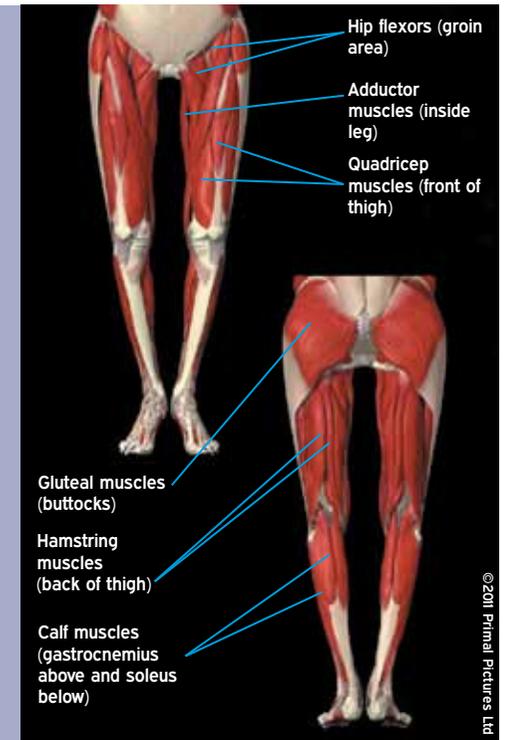
# Warming up and stretching the lower body



## WHY WARM UP AND STRETCH

Whatever your level of participation, from elite to recreational sport, formal or informal physical activity programmes, or just occasional leisure activities, this leaflet is aimed at helping you participate safely. The main aim of a thorough warm-up and stretch is to prepare the cardiovascular system (eg. heart and blood vessels supplying the muscles), the musculo-skeletal system (eg. muscles, ligaments), and the nervous system, for physical activity.

Warming up and stretching makes the muscles more flexible and there is a growing collection of research suggesting a relationship between muscle tightness and an increased risk of muscle strains (although this is still debated between some scientists).



Front view and rear view of leg muscles

Produced by

**sportEX**

# Advice handout

# Lower body stretch

## YOUR REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

This programme has specific exercises to help stretch and strengthen muscles which may be weak. It is really important to ensure the exercises are performed with good technique and good postural control. Make sure you are pain-free at all times and take care not to progress too quickly. Perform all exercises on both sides and hold each stretch for 20-30 seconds. We have given suggested sets and repetitions, but everyone is different so your practitioner may give guidance that is more specific to you.

## MAKE SURE TO WARM UP AND COOL DOWN

If muscles are tight, weak or injured, it is particularly important to warm up (unless advised otherwise by your practitioner) with a fast walk or a gentle jog at a pain-free pace for 5 minutes before you start your exercises. This increases your circulation and helps prepare the muscles for the activity to come. When you have finished your exercises, end the session with a 5 minute gentle walk or slow jog to allow your heart rate to slow down gradually.

## STRETCHING EXERCISES

continued overleaf



### QUADRICEPS STRETCH

Stand side on to a chair (or wall) for support and raise one heel to your buttocks. Hold your ankle with the arm on the same side. Gently pull the foot towards your buttocks to feel a stretch in the front of your thigh. Push your pelvis forwards to increase the stretch.

SETS	REPS
1	8



### GLUTEALS STRETCH

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet on the floor. Raise one leg to put it the ankle on the thigh of the other leg. Reach around the back of your leg on the floor, with both hands and pull the leg back feeling the stretch in your other buttock. Hold for 20-30 seconds.

SETS	REPS
1	8



### HAMSTRING STRETCH WITH CHAIR

Place your ankle on a chair relaxing your toes and gently lean forward until you feel a stretch in the hamstring area. Place your hands on your thigh, do not lean on your knee joint. Hold the stretch for 20-30 seconds.

SETS	REPS
1	8



### GASTROCNEMIUS STRETCH

Lean against a wall or chair for support, take a small step forward with one leg, stand with both heels in contact with floor. Bend the front knee (keeping the back knee straight) and your head up and hips forward. You should feel a stretch in your calf. Hold for 20-30 seconds.

SETS	REPS
1	8



### HIP FLEXOR STRETCH

Kneeling down, extend one leg out in front of you with the foot flat on the floor. Keeping your back straight, rest your hands on your front thigh, gently push your back hip forwards to feel a stretch in the front of your hip. Hold for 10 seconds.

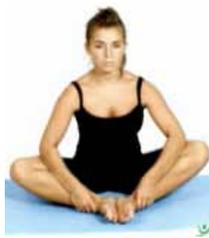
SETS	REPS
1	15



### SOLEUS STRETCH

Keep the same position as above but bend the back knee (instead of keeping it straight) while keeping the heels on the floor. Again you should feel this stretch in your calf area, although this stretches a different muscle. Hold for 20-30 seconds.

SETS	REPS
1	8



### ADDUCTOR STRETCH IN SITTING POSITION

In the sitting position place the soles of both feet together. Grasp both ankles and lean forward keeping a straight back to feel the stretch in the inside of your thighs. Hold for 20-30 seconds.

SETS	REPS
1	8



### ILIOTIBIAL BAND MUSCLE STRETCH

Stand side on to a wall with the affected leg closest to the wall. Place your arm on the wall for support and cross the affected leg behind the other. Lean your hips towards the wall until you feel a stretch on the outside of your hip. Hold stretch for 20 seconds.

SETS	REPS
1	8-10