

Hamstring Injury

The problem

- The hamstring is made up of a group of muscles including the biceps femoris (outside leg), semimembranosus (inside) and semitendinosus (inside) muscles, which act as extensors of the hip and flexors of the knee
- Pain in the posterior thigh can have several causes:
 - Hamstring muscle strain/tear
 - Hamstring tendinopathy
 - Bursitis
 - Sciatic nerve entrapment, which frequently accompanies muscle and tendon injuries as the nerve adheres to scar tissue
 - Lumbar spine pathology such as disc lesions
 - Sacroiliac joint pain syndromes
- A combination of these issues can cause hamstring pain. It is therefore critical to have your injury diagnosed and managed by a skilled sports medicine professional such as the SSOP physiotherapists.

What you can expect/look out for

- An initial slight niggle or tightness in the back of the thigh that could be passed off as an ordinary ache from training
- The pain doesn't go away, rather worsening until training is no longer possible
- Acute searing pain in the posterior thigh when increasing intensity or speed during training
- After the injury there is usually a period of tightness, pain and fear of re-injury

Hints for self-management

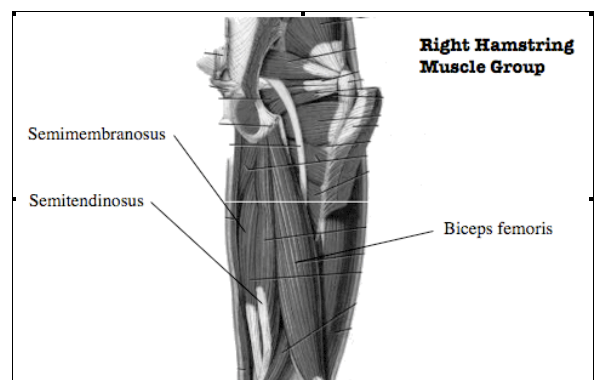
- Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation should be followed for at least 72 hours immediately after the injury
- Anti-inflammatory medication may reduce pain and swelling
- Ice the injury
- Gently stretch hamstrings, although this can exacerbate some hamstring conditions and should be applied judiciously

Management options

- Physio will usually include massage and joint mobilisation, pelvic realignment, strength/endurance/plyometric exercise, and running technique analysis and re-training
- Exercise and training directed at core stability is also likely to be included in your comprehensive rehabilitation plan

Interesting facts

- Sometimes the adductor is added to the hamstring muscle group due to its similar function
- While running, the hamstring is most active at three stages:
 1. as the leg swings through to decelerate and control hip flexion and knee extension
 2. to prepare the foot to hit the ground and stabilise the knee as foot contact is made
 3. to extend the hip and flex the knee at the end of the stance phase to propel the body forward
- Problems usually occur at the end of the swing phase, as the hamstrings contract to control the hip and knee and get ready for landing, or at the stance phase as they contract forcefully to push the body forwards



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