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GROIN & HIP STRETCHES

Note: If you have had any recent surgery, muscle or joint problem, please consult your personal health care professional.

How to Stretch:

Stretching should be done slowly without bouncing. Stretch to where you feel a slight, easy stretch. Hold this feeling for 5-15 seconds. As you hold this stretch, the feeling of tension should diminish. If it doesn't, just ease off slightly into a more comfortable stretch. The easy stretch reduces tension and readies the tissues for the developmental stretch.

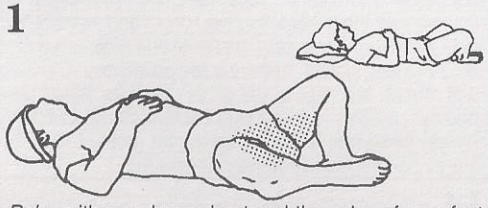
After holding the easy stretch move a fraction of an inch farther into the stretch until you feel mild tension again. This is the developmental stretch which should be held for 5-15 seconds. This feeling of stretch tension should also slightly diminish or stay the same. If the tension increases or becomes painful, you are overstretching. Ease off a bit to a comfortable stretch. The developmental stretch reduces tension and will safely increase flexibility.

Hold only stretch tensions that feel good to you. The key to stretching is to be relaxed while you concentrate on the area being stretched. Your breathing should be slow, deep and rhythmical. Don't worry about how far you can stretch. Stretch relaxed and limberness will become just one of the many by-products of regular stretching.

Do a light warm-up of walking for several minutes prior to stretching.

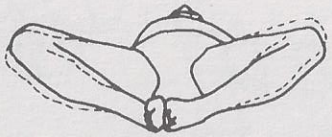
The dotted areas are those areas of the body where you will most likely feel the stretch.

1



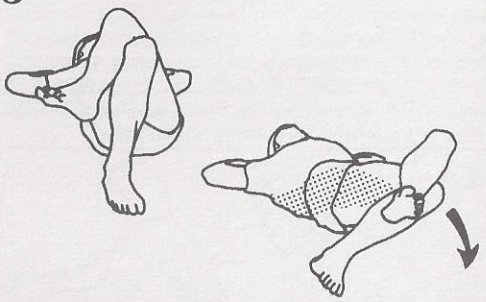
Relax with your knees bent and the soles of your feet together. This comfortable position will stretch your groin. Hold this stretch for 30 seconds.

2



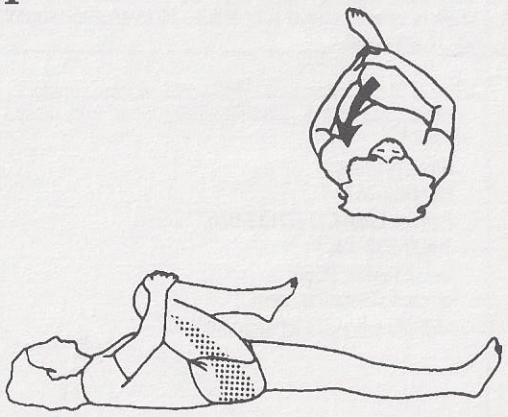
From the lying groin stretch, gently rock your legs as one unit back and forth, 10-12 times. These are real easy movements of no more than 1 inch in either direction. Initiate movements from top of hips. This will gently limber up your groin and hips.

3



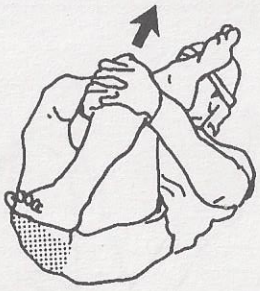
After gently stretching the groin, bring your knees together and rest your feet on the floor. Lift the left leg over the right leg and from here, use your left leg to pull your right leg toward the floor until you feel a good stretch. Stretch and relax. Keep the upper back, shoulders and elbows flat on the floor with your head resting in your hands. The idea is not to touch the floor with your right knee, but to stretch within your limits. Hold for 30 seconds. Breathe easily. Repeat stretch for other side, crossing right over left and moving legs down to the right.

4



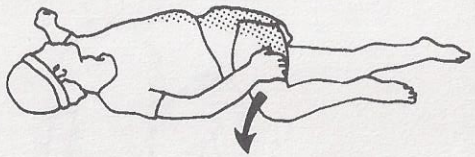
Gently pull your right knee toward your chest, then pull the knee across your body toward your left shoulder to create a stretch on the outisde of your right hip. Hold an easy stretch for 15-20 seconds. Do both sides.

5



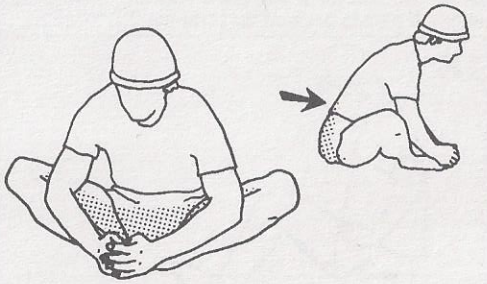
Lie on your back. Bend your right knee and put the outside of your right lower leg just above your left knee. With your hands just below your left knee, gently pull your leg toward your chest until a stretch is felt in your right buttocks area (piriformis). Hold for 15-20 seconds. Lift the back of your head off the ground and look straight ahead as you stretch. Breathe slowly and deeply. Repeat for other side.

6



Bend your leg and, with your opposite hand, pull that bent leg up and over your other leg as shown in illustration. Turn your head to look toward the hand of the arm that is straight (head should be resting on the floor). Make sure the back of your shoulders are kept flat on the floor. Now, using your hand on your thigh (resting just above the knee), pull your bent leg down toward the floor until you get the right stretch feeling in your lower back and side of hip. Keep feet and ankles relaxed. Hold a comfortable stretch for 30 seconds, each side.

7



Put the soles of your feet together with your heels a comfortable distance from your groin. With your hands around your feet slowly contract your abdominals to assist you in flexing forward until you feel an easy stretch in the groin. Make your movement forward by bending from the hips and not from the shoulders. If possible, keep your elbows on the outside of your lower legs for greater stability during the stretch. Hold a comfortable stretch for 20-30 seconds. Exhale as you go forward. Breathe rhythmically during the stretch.

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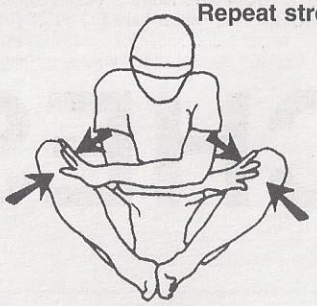
8

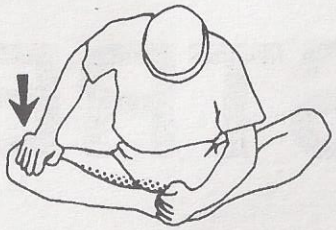
Repeat stretch 7



With hands supplying slight resistance on insides of opposite thighs, try to bring knees together, just enough to contract the muscles in the groin. Hold this stabilized tension for 5-8 seconds, then relax and stretch the groin as in stretch #7. This will help relax a tight groin area., This technique of tension-relax-stretch is valuable for those who have had groin problems.

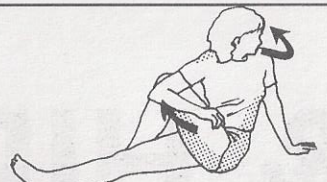
9

10



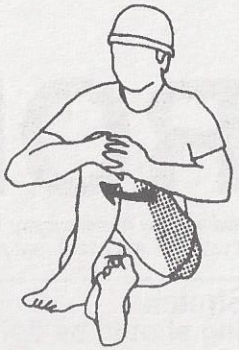
Hold onto your feet with one hand, with your elbow on the inside of the lower leg to hold down and stabilize the leg. With your other hand on the inside of your leg (not on the knee), gently push your leg downward to isolate and stretch this side of the groin. Hold for 25-30 seconds each side. This is a very good isolation stretch for people who want to limber up a tight groin so that the knees can fall more naturally downward.

11



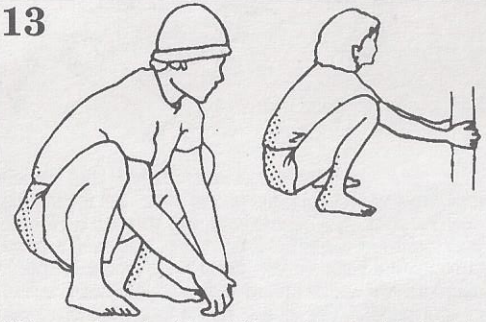
Sit with your right leg straight. Bend your left leg, cross your left foot over and rest it to the outside of your right knee. Bend your right elbow and rest it on the outside of your upper left thigh, just above the knee. During the stretch use your elbow to keep this leg stationary with controlled pressure to the inside. Now, with your left hand resting behind you, slowly turn your head to look over your left shoulder, and at the same time rotate your upper body toward your left hand and arm. As you turn your upper body, think of turning your hips in the same direction (though your hips won't move because your right elbow is keeping the left leg stationary). This should give you a stretch in your lower back and side of hip. Hold for 10 seconds. Do both sides. Don't hold your breath.

12



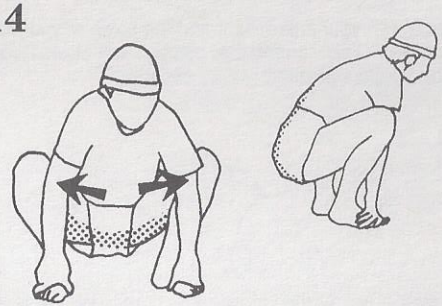
With your left foot resting to the outside of your right knee, pull your knee across your body toward your opposite shoulder until an easy stretch is felt on the side of the hip. Hold for 20 seconds. Do both sides.

13



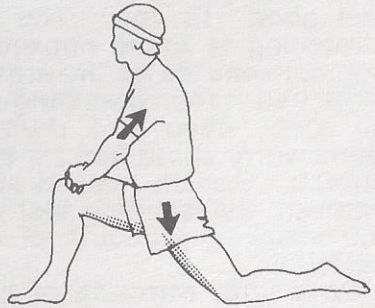
With your feet shoulder width apart and pointed out to about a 15 degree angle, heels on the ground, bend your knees and squat down. If you have trouble staying in this position hold onto something for support. It is a great stretch for your ankles, Achilles tendon area, groin, lower back and hips. Hold stretch for 15-30 seconds. **Be careful if you have had any knee problems. If pain is present discontinue this stretch.**

14



To increase the stretch in the groin, place your elbows on the inside of your upper legs and gently push outward with both elbows as you bend slightly forward from your hips. Your thumbs should be on the inside of your feet with your fingers along the outside borders of the feet. Hold stretch for 20 seconds. Do not overstretch. If you have trouble balancing, elevate your heels slightly.

15

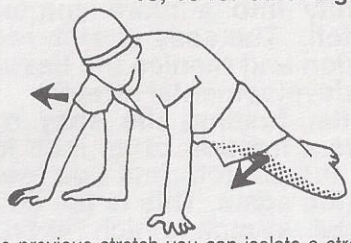


As in the drawing above, move one leg forward until the knee of the forward leg is directly over the ankle. Your other knee should be resting on the ground. Lower the front of your hip downward until an easy stretch is felt in front of the hip and possibly in your hamstrings and groin. Do this without changing the position of the knee on the ground or the forward foot. Hold the stretch for 15-20 seconds.

16

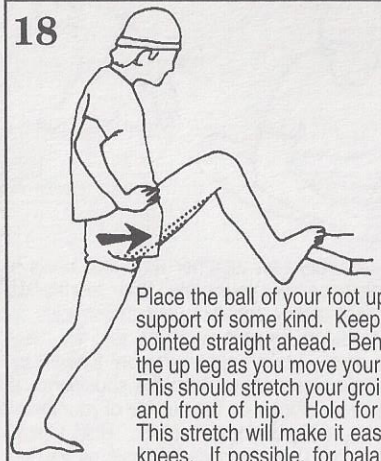
Repeat stretches 15, 16 for other leg.

17



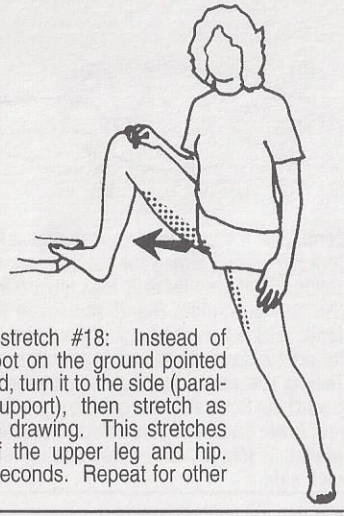
From the previous stretch you can isolate a stretch in the inside of the upper leg. Bend your rear knee and move your rear foot to the inside. This will make a 90 degree angle at the knee joint. Move your shoulders off your knee and put your hands to the inside of your upper leg (groin). Now gently lower your hip downward until the stretch is felt on inside of leg. Do not move your back knee or front foot. Be sure that your front knee is directly above your ankle. Hold an easy stretch for 15 seconds.

18



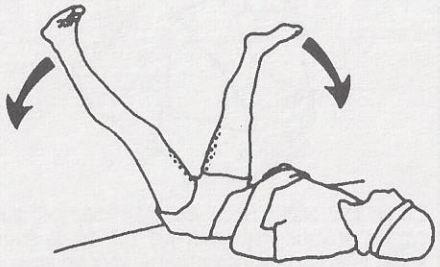
Place the ball of your foot up on a secure support of some kind. Keep the down leg pointed straight ahead. Bend the knee of the up leg as you move your hips forward. This should stretch your groin, hamstrings and front of hip. Hold for 20 seconds. This stretch will make it easier to lift your knees. If possible, for balance and control, use your hands to hold onto something. Do stretch for both legs.

19



Variation of stretch #18: Instead of having the foot on the ground pointed straight ahead, turn it to the side (parallel to the support), then stretch as shown in the drawing. This stretches the inside of the upper leg and hip. Hold for 15 seconds. Repeat for other leg.

20



Start with your legs elevated and close together with your butt about 5-10" away from the wall so that your lower back is flat and not arched or off the floor. Slowly separate your legs until you feel an easy stretch in the groin area. Hold for 20-30 seconds and relax. Also good for hip flexibility.

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