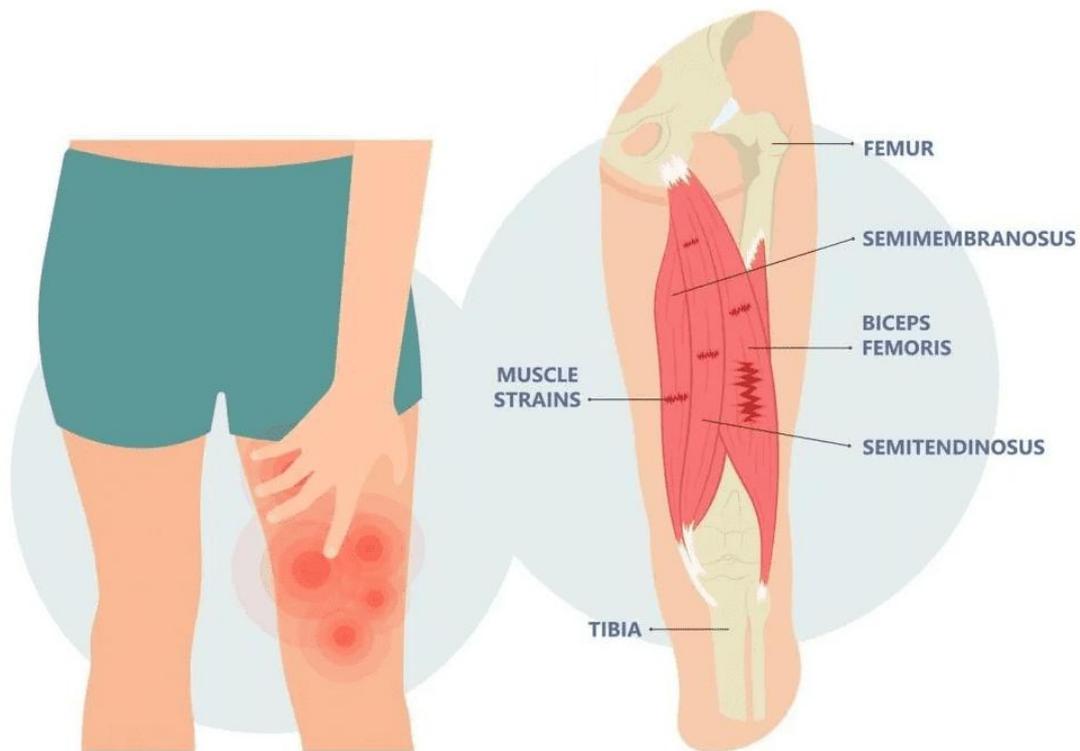


Hamstring Injury



What is a hamstring injury?

The hamstrings are a group of three muscles at the back of your thigh. They help bend the knee and move the hip. A hamstring injury occurs when these muscles are overstretched or torn, commonly during running, sprinting or sudden movements.

Hamstring injuries range from mild strains to more severe muscle tears.

Common causes

- Sudden acceleration or sprinting

- Overstretching the muscle
- Poor warm-up before activity
- Muscle weakness or imbalance
- Fatigue or returning to sport too quickly
- Reduced flexibility

Symptoms

You may experience:

- Sudden sharp pain at the back of the thigh
- Tightness or pulling sensation
- Swelling or bruising
- Pain when walking, bending the knee or running
- Reduced strength or flexibility

Severity of hamstring injuries

- **Grade 1 (mild):** muscle overstretch, mild pain and stiffness
- **Grade 2 (moderate):** partial tear, pain, swelling and weakness
- **Grade 3 (severe):** complete tear, significant pain, bruising and loss of function (rare)

How is it diagnosed?

A healthcare professional such as a GP or physiotherapist will usually diagnose a hamstring injury based on:

- Your symptoms and injury history
- Physical examination
- Scans (ultrasound or MRI) only if needed for severe or ongoing symptoms

Treatment and early management

First 48–72 hours

- Reduce or stop painful activities
- Apply ice for 10–15 minutes, 2–3 times per day
- Gentle movement within comfort
- Avoid aggressive stretching or massage early on

Pain relief

- Simple pain relief such as paracetamol may help
- Anti-inflammatory medication may be advised by your GP

Rehabilitation and exercises

Exercise-based rehabilitation is key to recovery:

- Gradual strengthening of hamstrings and surrounding muscles
- Improving flexibility and control
- Progressive return to walking, running and sport

A physiotherapist can guide safe and effective exercises tailored to your injury.

Return to activity

- Return to sport or exercise should be gradual
- Avoid sudden increases in speed or intensity
- Full strength and pain-free movement should be achieved before return to sport

Recovery times (approximate)

- Mild strain: 1–3 weeks
- Moderate strain: 4–8 weeks
- Severe tear: several months

Recovery varies depending on severity and adherence to rehabilitation.

Hamstring Strain Rehabilitation Exercises



Standing hamstring stretch



Hamstring stretch on wall



Standing calf stretch



Prone knee bend



Prone hip extension



Resisted hamstring curl



Chair lift



Lunge

When to seek medical advice

Contact a healthcare professional if:

- Pain is severe or worsening
- You are unable to walk normally
- Symptoms do not improve after 2–3 weeks

- There is significant bruising or swelling

Prevention tips

- Warm up properly before exercise
- Build strength and flexibility gradually
- Avoid sudden spikes in training load
- Maintain good hip and core strength

Key messages

- Hamstring injuries are common and usually recover well
- Early advice and progressive exercises reduce re-injury risk
- Rushing back to sport increases the chance of recurrence

If symptoms are affecting your daily activities or sport, speak to your GP or physiotherapist for assessment and guidance.