

# Groin Strain

## What is a groin strain?

A strain is a stretch or tear of a muscle or tendon. People commonly call such an injury a "pulled" muscle. The muscles in your groin help bring your legs together. There are two muscles that may commonly get injured in a groin strain: the adductor magnus (the large muscle running down the inner side of the thigh) and the sartorius (a thinner muscle that starts on the outside of your hip, crosses your thigh and attaches near the inside of the knee).

## How does it occur?

A groin strain most commonly occurs when you are running or jumping or when there is a forced push-off or cut.

## What are the symptoms?

You will have pain or tenderness along the inner side of your thigh or in the groin area. You will have pain when you bring your legs together. You may have pain when lifting your knee up.

## How is it diagnosed?

Your health care provider will take note of your symptoms and will examine your thigh and hip.

## How is it treated?

Treatment may include:

- applying ice to the strained muscle for 20 to 30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours for 2 or 3 days or until the pain goes away
- taking an anti-inflammatory medication prescribed by your health care provider
- wearing a supportive bandage called a thigh wrap or taping your thigh or groin
- doing the rehabilitation exercises you are given.

While you are recovering from your injury, you will need to change your sport or activity to one that does not make your condition worse. For example, you may need to swim instead of run.

## When can I return to my sport or activity?

The goal of rehabilitation is to return you to your sport or activity as soon as is safely possible. If you return too soon you may worsen your injury, which could lead to permanent damage. Everyone recovers from injury at a different rate. Return to your sport or activity will be determined by how soon

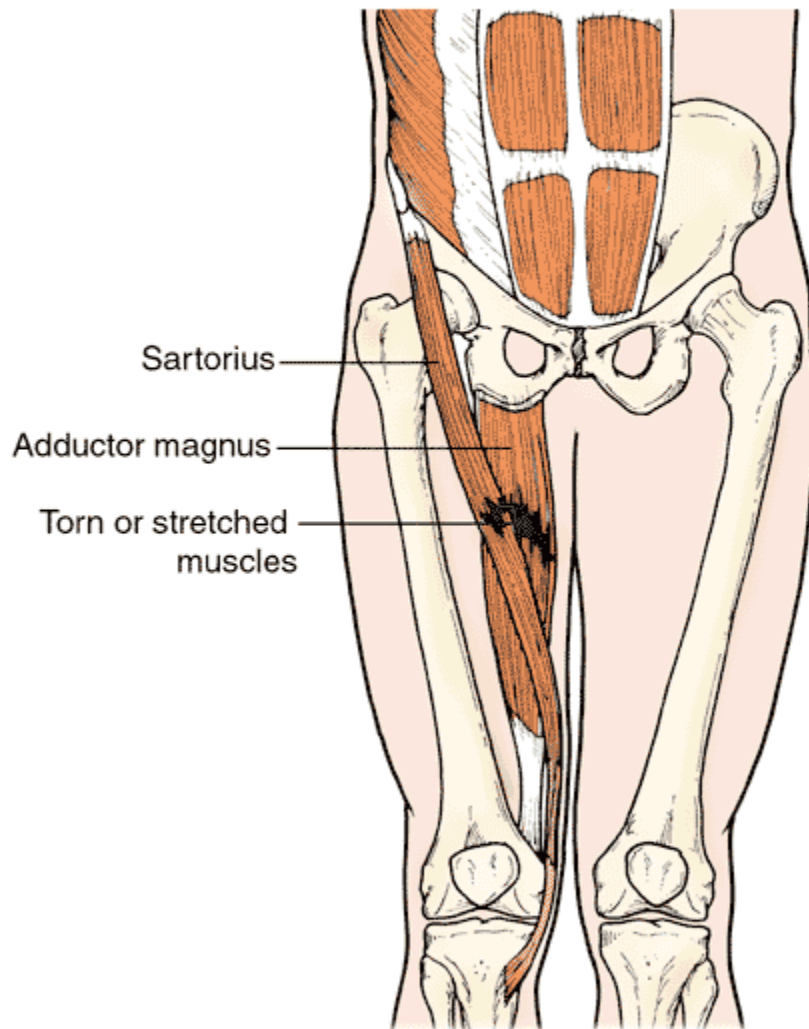
your groin area recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been since your injury occurred. In general, the longer you have symptoms before you start treatment, the longer it will take to get better. You may safely return to your sport or activity when, starting from the top of the list and progressing to the end, each of the following is true:

- You have full range of motion in the injured leg compared to the uninjured leg.
- You have full strength of the injured leg compared to the uninjured leg.
- You can jog straight ahead without pain or limping.
- You can sprint straight ahead without pain or limping.
- You can do 45-degree cuts, first at half-speed, then at full-speed.
- You can do 20-yard figures-of-eight, first at half-speed, then at full-speed.
- You can do 90-degree cuts, first at half-speed, then at full-speed.
- You can do 10-yard figures-of-eight, first at half-speed, then at full-speed.
- You can jump on both legs without pain and you can jump on the injured leg without pain.

## **How can I prevent a groin strain?**

A groin strain is best prevented by warming up properly and doing groin muscle stretching exercises prior to your activities. This is especially important in activities such as sprinting or jumping.

## Groin Strain



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## Groin Strain Rehabilitation Exercises

Begin stretching your groin muscles as soon as you can tolerate a stretch to that area.

- **Hip adductor stretch:** Lie on your back, bend your knees, and put your feet flat on the floor. Gently spread your knees apart, stretching the muscles on the inside of your thigh. Hold this for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

You may do the next 3 exercises when the pain in the groin muscles decreases.

- **Hamstring stretch on wall:** Lie on your back with your buttocks close to a doorway, and extend your legs straight out in front of you along the floor. Raise the injured leg and rest it against the wall next to the door frame. Your other leg should extend through the doorway. You should feel a stretch in the back of your thigh. Hold this position for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.
- **Side-lying leg lift (cross over):** Lie on your injured side with your top leg bent and that foot placed in front of the injured leg, which should be kept straight. Raise your injured leg as far as you can comfortably and hold it for 5 seconds. Keep your hips still while you are lifting your leg. Hold this position for 5 seconds and then slowly lower your leg. Do 3 sets of 10.
- **Side-lying leg lift:** Lying on your uninjured side, tighten the front thigh muscles on your injured leg and lift that leg 8 to 10 inches away from the other leg. Keep the leg straight. Do 3 sets of 10.

When the side-lying leg lifts become easy, it is time to start strengthening your thigh muscles and groin muscles using the elastic tubing exercises.

- **Hip flexion:** Stand facing away from a door. Tie a loop in one end of a piece of elastic tubing and put it around your injured ankle. Tie a knot in the other end of the tubing and shut the knot in the door near the bottom. Tighten up the front of your thigh muscle and bring your leg forward, keeping your knee straight. Do 3 sets of 10.
- **Resisted hip extension:** Stand facing a door with elastic tubing tied around the ankle on your injured side. Knot the other end of the tubing and shut the knot in the door. Pull your leg straight back, keeping your knee straight. Make sure you do not lean forward. Do 3 sets of 10.
- **Hip abduction (with elastic tubing):** Stand sideways near a doorway with your uninjured side closest to the door. Tie elastic tubing around the ankle on your injured side. Knot the other end of the tubing and close the knot in the door. Extend your leg out to the side, keeping your knee straight. Return to the starting position. Do 3 sets of 10.

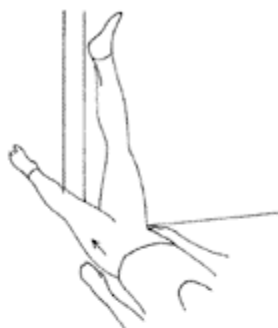
To challenge yourself, move farther away from the door.

- **Hip adduction:** Tie a loop in one end of the tubing and slip the loop around the ankle of your injured side. Make a knot in the other end of the tubing and close the knot in a door. Stand sideways to the door, with your uninjured leg away from the door. Bring your injured leg across your body sideways, crossing over your uninjured leg and stretching the tubing. Return to the starting position. Do 3 sets of 10.

## Groin Strain Exercises



**Hip adductor stretch**



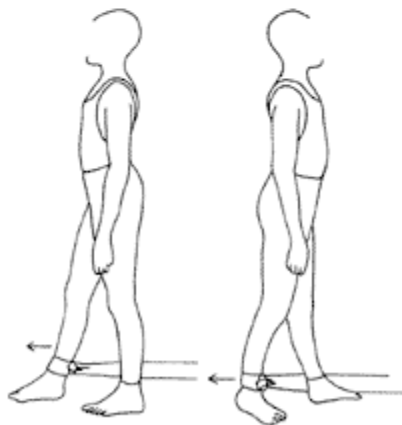
**Hamstring stretch on wall**



**Side-lying leg lift (cross over)**



**Side-lying leg lift**



**Hip flexion**

**Hip extension**



**Hip abduction**



**Hip adduction**