

# **Orthopaedic Connection**

## **Muscle Strains - Treatment and Prevention**

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### ***Transforming patient information into patient understanding.***

Last week I finished by telling you that there are three grades of thigh muscle strains. Grade 1 is mild and heals in days to a few weeks. Grade 3 strains are severe and may take months to heal. Grade 2 is somewhere in between 1 and 3 and could take several weeks to recover.

### **Treatment**

Treatment begins after an accurate diagnosis is made by examination. X-rays are done to rule out possible injury to the bone of the pelvis or femur. Patients ask me frequently why I am doing a plain x-ray if it is a muscle injury.

Because there is no law against having a fracture and a muscle strain. It is really bad to miss a fracture in these cases!

- Rest: You can't make this injury get better faster than it wants to. Use of crutches is strongly advised to avoid weight bearing and give the large muscle group time to rest and recover.
- Ice to the back of the thigh in the form of a cold pack for 20 minutes can do wonders. Do this 3 times per day for 3 days.
- Compression: Trying to wrap the thigh is a mess, but if you can find some kind of an elastic sleeve it might work.
- Elevation: Swelling will be less if you can keep you leg elevated a lot the first day or two.
- Aspirin, Motrin or similar to decrease pain and inflammation.

### **Physical Therapy**

Depending on the severity of the sprain I might want you to have physical therapy. Why? To try to further reduce swelling and hematoma and prevent scar tissue forming. When possible, to help restore range of motion, prevent muscle contracture and restore strength.

### **Best Treatment is to Prevent Strains**

- Tight muscles are vulnerable to strain so regular stretching is important.
- Muscle imbalance causes strain of the weaker muscle usually the hamstrings.

- Muscle fatigue does not allow the muscle to absorb energy making injury more likely.
- Warm up reduces stiffness and increases motion of joints.
- Slow stretching gives muscle time to respond and lengthen.
- Muscles can be conditioned and strains prevented by a regular program of exercises that a trainer or physical therapist can teach.

### **Factoid**

U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services projected that in 2 years health care spending will be 52% paid for by the government. Gulp! It keeps going up and up.

Log onto [www.orthopodsurgeon.com](http://www.orthopodsurgeon.com), which leads to Your Orthopaedic Connection. It has everything you need to know about muscle injury and everything else I treat in the office and hospital.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush