

# Exercise Guide for Hip Conditioning

Based on recommendations from  
the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons  
(AAOS)  
orthoinfo.aaos.org

## Introduction

### ❖ Using This Guide:

- ▶ Generally, the muscles of your hips tend to weaken over time when you have been enduring chronic arthritis, are coming back from an injury, or just recovering from surgery
- ▶ Any of these circumstances takes its toll on your hip joint and will exacerbate issues with weakness, limited motion, and pain
- ▶ This guide is intended to show you a range of exercises that will help you to condition the muscles of your hips so that you may gradually return to your daily routine and be able to increase your activities
- ▶ These exercises should be done routinely for about **4 to 6 weeks**, unless directed otherwise by your doctor or physical therapist
- ▶ **All exercises should be done at least TWICE A DAY – EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK**
- ▶ ***If you start to feel pain or tired during a certain exercise: stop, take a break, and switch to a different exercise. You may return to that exercise later when you feel that it is safe to do so.***
- ▶ Exercises should be continued even **AFTER** your recovery as a lifestyle adjustment to maintaining the health of your hips and are generally **done about 2 to 3 days a week**

### ❖ These exercises are focused on improving **two main things**:

- ▶ **Strength** – daily repetition of these exercises targets key muscle groups of your hips, which will build up your leg muscles to be able to take the stress off your hip joints
- ▶ **Flexibility** – in tandem with strength, exercises here allow you to build up and stretch your muscles, which gradually and safely increase your range of motion

### ❖ Targeted Muscles:

- ▶ Abductors (outer thigh)
- ▶ Adductors (inner thigh)
- ▶ Gluteus muscles (buttocks)
- ▶ Hamstrings (back of thigh)
- ▶ Piriformis (buttocks)
- ▶ Tensor Fascia (outer thigh)

### ❖ Tips:

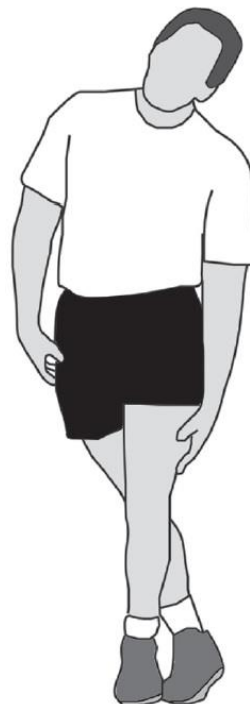
- ▶ Always **warm up** – it is recommended to start the first 10 minutes with low impact activities such as walking or riding a stationary bicycle
- ▶ Always **stretch** before and after exercises – exercises such as the following Iliotibial Band Stretch and Rotation Stretch will help reduce your chances of injury
- ▶ Always **be mindful of your pain** – these exercises should not cause pain. If they do, stop what you are doing immediately and consult with your doctor or physical therapist for alternative recommendations
- ▶ Always ask questions – especially if you're not sure on what to do in an exercise, it is safer to ask your doctor or physical therapist rather than to risk injury

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### Iliotibial Band Stretch

- ❖ **Target muscles:** **Tensor fascia** – the exercise will be felt at the **outside of your hip**
- ❖ **Equipment needed:** a chair or wall for support and balance
- ❖ **Directions:**
  - ▶ To be done while standing next to a wall for support
  - ▶ Cross the leg closest to the wall behind your other leg.
  - ▶ Lean your hip toward the wall until you feel a stretch at the outside of your hip.
  - ▶ Hold this position for about 30 seconds and then relax for another 30 seconds. Repeat.
  - ▶ Switch and repeat for your other side.
  - ▶ Avoid leaning forward or twisting at the waist.
- ❖ **Repetitions:** 3 sets of 10 repetitions. Repeat twice a day.



### Rotation Stretch

- ❖ **Target muscles:** **Piriformis** – the exercise will be felt at the **buttocks**
- ❖ **Equipment needed:** none
- ❖ **Directions:**
  - ▶ Start by sitting on the floor and straighten your legs ahead of you.
  - ▶ Cross one leg over the other.
  - ▶ Slowly twist toward your bent leg and place one hand on the floor for additional support.
  - ▶ Rest the elbow of your opposite arm on your bent leg and use it to continue to slowly twist further
  - ▶ Look over your shoulder and hold the stretch for about 30 seconds.
  - ▶ Relax and slowly rotate back to your center. Repeat.
  - ▶ Switch and repeat for your other side.
  - ▶ Try to keep your bottom planted on the floor as you perform this stretch.
- Repetitions:** 3 sets of 10 repetitions. Repeat twice a day.



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### Supine Hamstring Stretch

- ❖ **Target Muscles:** Hamstrings – the exercise will be felt at the back of your thigh
- ❖ **Equipment needed:** none or a towel if you cannot clasp your hands behind your thigh
- ❖ **Directions:**
  - ▶ Lie on the floor with both legs bent
  - ▶ Lift one leg off from the floor and bring the leg towards your chest
  - ▶ Clasp your hands behind that thigh right below your knee (or use a towel if you have trouble getting your hands behind your thigh)
  - ▶ Straighten your lifted leg and gently pull that leg closer towards you until you can feel a stretch
  - ▶ Hold this position for about 30 seconds
  - ▶ Relax and gently let your leg down. Repeat.
  - ▶ Switch sides and repeat for your other leg
- ❖ **Repetitions:** 3 sets of 10 repetitions. Repeat twice a day.



### Hip Flexion

- ❖ **Target Muscles:** Gluteus muscle group – the exercise will be felt at the buttocks
- ❖ **Equipment needed:** none
- ❖ **Directions:**
  - ▶ Lie face-up on the floor and with your legs straight.
  - ▶ Start bending one knee towards you and place your hands on the shin of that leg.
  - ▶ Slowly pull and bend that leg up towards your chest up to what you can tolerate.
  - ▶ When you've reached as far as you can bend, hold that position for about 30 seconds.
  - ▶ Relax and gently let your leg down. Repeat.
  - ▶ Switch sides and repeat for your other leg.
- ❖ **Repetitions:** 3 sets of 10 repetitions. Repeat twice a day.



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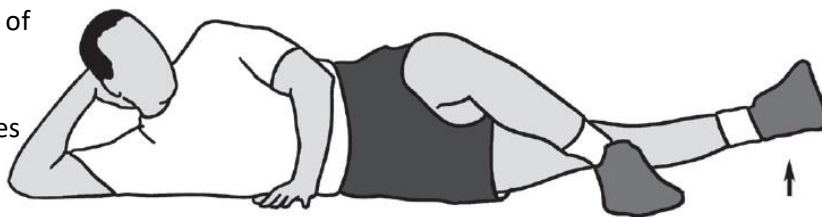
### Hip AB-duction

- ❖ **Target Muscles:** Abductors and gluteus – the exercise will be felt at the outer side of your thigh and buttocks
- ❖ **Equipment needed:** none
- ❖ **Directions:**
  - ▶ Lie on the floor **on your side** with the target leg facing up and the bottom/other leg bent to support you
  - ▶ Straighten your top leg and slowly raise it just above your leg (or as high as you can) while keeping it straight
  - ▶ Hold this position for about 5 seconds
  - ▶ Relax and gently lower your leg back down and rest for about 2 seconds. Repeat.
  - ▶ Switch and roll to your other side so that the other leg is now facing up and repeat for your other leg
- ❖ **Repetitions:** 3 sets of 10 repetitions. Repeat twice a day.



### Hip ADD-uction

- ❖ **Target Muscles:** Adductors – the exercise will be felt at your inner thigh
- ❖ **Equipment needed:** none
- ❖ **Directions:**
  - ▶ Lie on the floor **on your side** with the target leg resting on the floor. Have both legs straightened out.
  - ▶ Bend your top leg and cross it over in front of the other (target) leg.
  - ▶ While keeping the target leg straight, raise the leg resting on the floor to about 6 inches from the floor.
  - ▶ Hold this position for about 5 seconds.
  - ▶ Slowly lower that leg and rest for 2 seconds. Repeat.
  - ▶ Switch and roll to your other side so that the other leg is now resting on the floor and repeat for that leg.
- ❖ **Repetitions:** 3 sets of 10 repetitions. Repeat twice a day.



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### Straight Leg Raises (Lying Face DOWN)

- ❖ **Target Muscles:** Hamstrings and gluteus – the exercise will be felt at the back of your thigh and your buttocks
- ❖ **Equipment needed:** none
- ❖ **Directions:**
  - ▶ Lie down on your stomach on the floor with your legs straight and cross your arms under your head
  - ▶ On one leg, tighten the muscles of your buttocks and back thigh
  - ▶ Raise that same leg towards the ceiling as high as you can while keeping that leg straight
  - ▶ Hold this position for about 5 seconds
  - ▶ Gently lower your leg and rest it for about 2 seconds. Repeat.
  - ▶ Switch sides and repeat for your other leg
- ❖ **Repetitions:** 3 sets of 10 repetitions. Repeat twice a day.

