



DYNAMIC MOTION PHYSIOTHERAPY



What is Hamstring Strain?

A **hamstring strain**, sometimes called a pulled **hamstring**, happens when one or more of these muscles gets stretched too far and starts to **tear**. **Hamstring strains** can be mild, with little **pain** and a short recovery time. Or, they can be severe and need surgery and crutches for weeks.

Symptoms of a hamstring strain are:

- A sudden sharp pain at the back of the leg, particularly during sprinting.
- Reduced length of the hamstring during stretching and pain with stretching.
- Swelling and bruising along the back of the thigh.
- Moderate to severe tenderness over the area of the strain.
- Difficulty walking and running.

Hamstring strains are graded according to severity:

Features of a grade 1 strain are:

- Tightness at the back of the thigh.
- Some discomfort with walking.
- Minimal or no swelling and bruising.

In a grade 2 strain:

- The person may limp.
- There may be sudden twinges of pain with activity.
- More considerable swelling may occur, and bruising may surface after a few days.
- Bending the knee against resistance causes pain.
- The person may have difficulty straightening the knee.

In a grade 3 strain:

- There is severe pain.
- Walking is severely affected, and crutches may be needed.
- Severe pain occurs when the knee is bent.
- Swelling occurs immediately and there may be considerable bruising after a few days.

What to do:

- The first 48 hours following injury are critical.
 - Relative rest is important to prevent further injury and give the muscle time to heal.
 - This means avoiding fast, large, and repetitive movements of the legs.
 - Avoid stretching the hamstrings.
 - The period of rest will depend on the grade and severity of the strain.
 - Compression and elevation of the leg should be utilized to help reduce swelling.
 - Ice may be used to help relieve pain.
- Commonly, pain will settle from the initial injury within 2 weeks.
 - It is important at this point that you do not immediately return to the activity where the initial injury occurred as there is a significant risk of reinjury.
 - It is recommended to gradually ease back into activity, ensuring that you are symptom free whilst doing so.
 - Your physiotherapist can guide your return to activity and will prescribe exercises to enhance your recovery and reduce your risk of reinjury.