



**BODY IN
MOTION**

PHYSIO • REHAB • PILATES

"Keeping You Moving"

*Body In Motion's team of physiotherapists are here not only to help you back from injury, but also to help you reduce your risk of getting injured. As education is a key component of injury prevention, please read this month's look at **Hamstring Injuries**, and feel free to contact any one of the team to help reduce your risk!*

Hamstring Injuries

The hamstring muscles are amongst the most common victims of muscle injury in sport. They are particularly at risk in sports that involve running and kicking, and when injured, can become a recurrent problem.

Made up of three individual muscles, the hamstrings start at the bottom of the pelvis, run down the back of the thigh, and finish at the top of the shin bones. Cleverly known as "two joint muscles" because they cross (wait for it) two joints, the hamstrings perform two "actions". They contract 1) to bend the knee and 2) to extend the hip (or pull the thigh back on the pelvis).

Traditional hamstring strengthening exercises have been built around these two basic actions, and have been used for years. But training the hamstrings in this manner is probably not the best way to reduce the risk of injury. This is largely because when running or kicking, the hamstring action is effectively reversed.

Functionally, the hamstrings work to "slow down" the straightening of the knee, as well as the flexing - or bending - of the hip as the thigh and leg move forward in the running or kicking motion. And this is when most injuries occur. In order to prevent injuries, we must therefore change the way we train the hamstrings, and incorporate exercises geared more at controlling their lengthening rather than focussing on exercises that strengthen them as they shorten.

Exercises such as those used in the Nordic Hamstring Protocol have been shown clinically to reduce hamstring injury incidence, and are an easy addition to your current training regime. They are best combined with other "lengthening strengthening" exercises such as Good Mornings and/or Dead Lifts, and when implemented correctly, will help reduce your hamstring injury risk!



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