

HAMSTRING TEAR

The hamstring muscle group consists of three muscles located at the back of the thigh. Semimembranosus, semitendinosus and biceps femoris.

The hamstring is a common site for injury across many sports including running, rugby, soccer, tennis and AFL.

The anatomical 'architecture' of the hamstring is quite complex. All three muscles share a common point of origin at the ischial tuberosity (the bony prominence found deep in the lower buttock that we sit on).

Pain in the hamstring region is usually attributed to one of two things; an injury the hamstring muscle itself, or referred pain due to injury higher up in the buttock or lumbar spine.

Have you torn your hamstring?

A torn or strained hamstring is a memorable event. Usually you are mid activity & you feel a sudden severe pain at the back of the thigh. You are usually unable to continue with activity due to pain.

Risk factors? Previous injury, poor strength, lack of flexibility, inadequate warm up and imbalance between quadriceps & hamstring may potentially increase the risk of an injury from occurring.

Signs & Symptoms

- Pain at the back of the leg of sudden onset
- Pain on hamstring stretch
- Pain on resisted hamstring contraction – your physio will do a variety of tests to assess this.
- Bruising may be present at the site of the tear or below depending on the severity.

How bad is it? Hamstring tears are graded depending on the amount of muscle fibre disruption.

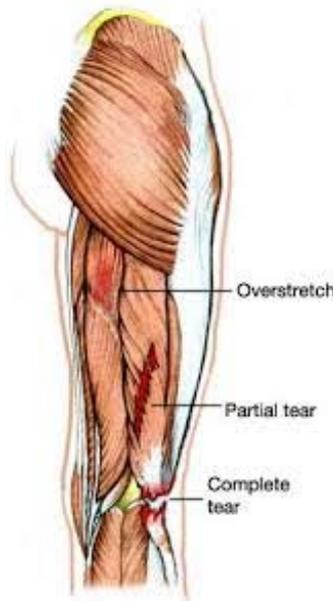
Grade I: over stretching of the fibres without damage.

Grade II: Partial tear of the fibres

Grade III: complete disruption of the muscle fibres.

Ross Messiter
Principal Physiotherapist

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Physiotherapist



Your physiotherapist will also use a variety of assessment techniques to determine whether the tear is located in the muscle belly or the hamstring tendon

What does this mean? Generally there is no exact time frame in which you will be assured a return to sport following hamstring injury.

Vaguely speaking: Grade I is a 2-3 week injury, Grade II is a 4-6 week injury and Grade III is an 8-12 week injury. This is patient dependant and a number of factors can affect time taken to return to full activity.

Management:

Initial management of a hamstring injury regardless of the severity is RICE: Rest, Ice, Compression & Elevation. The first 48 hours is extremely important to minimise bruising and swelling in the muscle tissue.

Physiotherapy treatment can also include:

- **Soft tissue & myofascial release** to the hamstring and tight surrounding muscles such as the gluteals & lumbar spine
- **Dry needling** to control inflammation & pain
- **Electrophysical therapy** to treat swelling & inflammation
- Graded exercises including **stretching and strengthening**
- Guidance through a gradual return to running program

Physiotherapy is an important tool in the treatment of hamstring injury. Correct remodeling of injured tissue is essential in preventing re-injury from occurring when the athlete returns to sport.

Premature return to sport places the athlete at increased risk of re-injury. Full strength & range of motion along with assessment of sport specific training should be evaluated during the rehabilitation program.

Ross and Emma specialise in the treatment of sports and musculoskeletal injuries. If you would like to make an appointment please contact us on **9328 3822**.

