



## ORTHOPAEDIC ASSOCIATES OF ST. AUGUSTINE, P.A.

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### Stretches for Hamstring Muscles



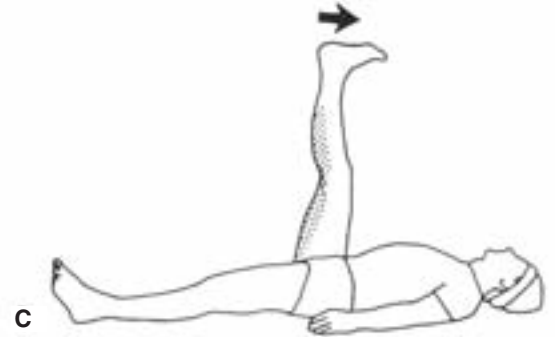
A

**Stretch No. 1.** Begin in the bent-knee position shown. This position contracts the quadriceps and relaxes the hamstrings. Hold for 30 seconds. The primary function of the quadriceps is to straighten the leg. The basic function of the hamstrings is to bend the knee. Because these muscles have opposing actions, tightening the quadriceps will relax the hamstrings. Now, as you hold this bent-knee position, feel the difference between the front of the thigh and the back of the thigh. The quadriceps should feel hard and tight while the hamstrings should feel soft and relaxed. It is easier to stretch the hamstrings, as in the next stretch, if they have been relaxed first (Fig. 7F-11A).



B

**Stretch No. 2.** Sit down and straighten your right leg. The sole of your left foot will be resting next to the inside of your straightened leg. Lean slightly forward from the hips and stretch the hamstrings of your right leg. Find an easy stretch and relax. If you cannot touch your toes comfortably, use a towel to help you stretch. Hold for 30 seconds. Do not lock your knee. Your right quadriceps should be soft and relaxed during the stretch. Keep your right foot upright with the ankle and toes relaxed. Then stretch the left leg (Fig. 7F-11B).



C

**Stretch No. 3.** Lie on your back and lift your leg up toward a 90-degree angle at the thigh joint. Keep the low back flat against the floor during the stretch. Hold stretch for 15 to 20 seconds. Do both legs (Fig. 7F-11C).



D

**Stretch No. 4.** To stretch the upper hamstrings and hip, hold on to the outside of your ankle with one hand, with your other hand and forearm around your bent knee. Gently pull the leg as one unit toward your chest until you feel an easy stretch in the back of the upper leg. You may want to do this stretch while you rest your back against something for support. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds. Be certain the leg is pulled as one unit so that no stress is felt in the knee (Fig. 7F-11D).



E

**Stretch No. 5.** Begin this stretch lying down, then lean forward to hold onto your leg as described in the previous stretch. Gently pull leg as one unit toward your chest until you feel an easy stretch in the buttocks and upper hamstring. Hold for 20 seconds. Doing this stretch in a prone position will increase the stretch in the hamstrings for people who are relatively flexible in this area. Do both legs and compare (Fig. 7F-11E).