



UNLOCKING YOUR TIGHT HIPs

for free movement.



GUEST CORNER

LIZE LUBBE

The Role Of Your Hip Joints In Your Mobility

The hip joints (ball and socket joints that move in many directions) are connected to the pelvic girdle, which is the foundation that gives stability for the hips to move. The hips require several muscles to control and assist the hips through its range of motion. The hip joint is a major weight-bearing joint and provides mobility for the lower body and stability for the pelvis and serves as a shock absorber for the whole body.

Understanding The Causes Of Hip Pain

Most hip pain is caused by wear and tear as we age, resulting in osteoarthritis (“OA”), or wear and tear of the cartilage in the joint. Contributing factors include obesity and not enough support from the muscles to offload on the weight bearing joint.

Other factors causing hip pain, tightness and stiffness are:

- Daily habits, sitting incorrectly and for too long;
- Previous injuries that did not recover fully;
- Weak core, pelvis, and hip muscles;
- Poor flexibility in especially the Hamstrings and hip flexors; and
- Internal structural hip tendinopathy.

Pain and discomfort from tight hips are normally felt in the groin area, but can also be felt in the buttocks, lower back, sacroiliac joints and even in the knees. Tight hips can cause pain and injury but being too loose in the hips also comes with problems, as you need the strength and stability from the hips to support the pelvis, spine and knees.

Exercises To Loosen Your Hips

To unlock your tight hips, you should have a good balance between your pelvic stability and hip mobility. To that end, the following exercises will strengthen your core and gluteal(buttock) muscles and improve your leg/hip flexibility.

1. Hip flexors: Lie on your back on a solid surface. Pull the right leg up to

your chest with your hands and drop your left leg off the side of the table/bed. (If your left leg cannot angle downwards and you feel a pulling tightness from your groin into the top of your thigh, that is a positive tight hip flexor test (the Thomas Test)). The stretch is staying in this position relaxing the lower back and doing deep diaphragm (belly) breathing as you relax the lower back passively down into the table.

2. Hamstrings: Stand holding onto a firm base lift your right leg up on a higher surface, such as a step. Keep your pelvis level and your right leg straight. Lean forward with a flat back and your torso towards your knee. If you feel tightness behind your right leg or behind the knee that indicates tight hamstrings. The stretch is the same as the Thomas Test and gently hold the stretch and move in and out of the stretch.

3. Hip external rotators: Sit on a chair and put the right ankle over the left thigh dropping your right knee down. Lean with your torso forward onto the right leg. You should feel a stretch in your right buttocks. Move in and out of the stretch.

4. Frog/butterfly stretch: Lie on your back with knees bent up and sole of feet touching each other. Gently allow your knees to fall open.

5. Modified Pigeon: Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on floor. Cross your right ankle over the left knee, pushing the right knee open away from your chest, progress by lifting the left leg up to your chest.

6. Piriformis stretch: Lie on your back with your legs straight. Hug your right knee to your chest, slightly across to your left chest/shoulder. Hold the knee aimed to your left shoulder and use your left hand to gently pull the right ankle up to your chest

Exercises To Strengthen The Pelvis And Core

Relax the rest of your body as you focus on contracting the pelvic, core muscles, never hold your breath:

1. Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat. Pull your belly button to your backbone, pull up the pelvic floor muscles and squeeze the abdominal muscles tight as you exhale (imagine you putting a vacuum into a plastic bag and sucking the air out). This will activate the deep inner core muscles (Transvers Abdominis or “TVA”) which is the natural inner corset of our bodies.

2. Lie on your back and initiate your TVA then add the buttock muscles and lift your hips up into a bridge to strengthen your glutes.

3. Repeat the last exercise. As you bridge up, open your thighs.

4. Lie on your side with knees bent. Use a resistance band above your knees, keeping feet together. Open the top knee in a clam shell.

Above are gentle suggested exercises. If you already experience any pain or discomfort, you need more targeted, individualize exercises, and added treatment and you should contact your physical therapist or health care provider.

Lize Lubbe is the owner of Lize Lubbe Physical Therapy with its main practice located at 892 Route 35 in Cross River and a PT Studio in the premises of Apex Fitness (where her team focus on the rehabilitation of sports-related injuries). Learn more by calling 914-875-9430, emailing contact@lizelubbept.com or visiting www.lizelubbept.com.

If you have difficulty putting your socks or shoes on or cannot bend and squat down to the floor sitting back on your heels, you probably will benefit from tips to “unlock” your tight hips.



We are hands on PTs!

The professional services of the team at

Lize Lubbe Physical Therapy

include:

- Pre & Post Surgery Rehabilitation
- Sports Injury Rehabilitation
- Neurological Rehabilitation
- Treatment of Musculoskeletal & Orthopedic Conditions
- Postural, Balance & Gait Training
- Pain & Headache Management
- Body Rebalancing through Diaphragm, Breathing & Pelvic Stability



892 NY-35, Cross River, NY 10518
(blue office building)

914.875.9430

www.lizelubbept.com

contact@lizelubbept.com

