

# Lower Body Stretches

The following exercises aim to improve flexibility of the leg muscles.

## Proper Stretching Technique

- **ALWAYS STRETCH BOTH SIDES EVENLY.** Don't stretch one side more than the other, unless recommended by your practitioner.
- Stretch slowly and smoothly. Hold each stretch for about thirty seconds then release gently. Never bounce or push a muscle beyond its ability.
- Avoid over-stretching. Never stretch to the point of pain or discomfort. You will feel a slight tension or pull on the muscle at the peak of the stretch.
- Don't forget to breathe. Using deep breaths will help you relax into the stretch. Never hold your breath while you stretch.

If you feel sharp pain at any time during these exercises, stop and seek further advice from the Chiro Clinic.



### **Hamstring Stretch (Seated)**

Start in a neutral position.

Place one leg straight out in front of you. Bend the other leg to rest the foot at the side of the knee and relax this leg to the side.



Lift the back up straight and gently lean forwards over the leg keeping the back straight. You will feel a stretch down the back of the leg.



### **Hamstring Stretch (Standing)**

Start standing. Place one leg on a low chair or step in front of you, toes pointing up.

Keeping the back straight, gently lean forwards over the leg. You can support yourself by placing the arms on the thigh as shown.





## Hip Flexor Stretch

Start kneeling on one knee. Make sure the leg in front of you is bent at a right angle.

Keeping the back straight and lifted, gently lunge forward slightly tucking the pelvis under.

You will feel a stretch in the front of the hip and thigh.



## Quadriceps Stretch (Standing)

Start standing. Lift one leg behind you holding onto the foot or ankle. Gently pull the foot towards the buttock.

Make sure both knees remain together. Gently pull the foot closer to you slightly tucking the pelvis under. You will feel a stretch in the front of the thigh.

You may need to stabilise yourself with your free hand.



## Quadriceps Stretch (Kneeling)

For those who find the above stretch difficult. Start kneeling on one knee. Make sure the leg in front is bent at a right angle.

Tuck the pelvis under and lower the chin to the chest.

You will feel a stretch going down the front of the thigh.

## Calf Stretch

Start standing. Lunge forwards with one leg keeping the back leg straight. Push the heel of the back foot into the floor. You will feel a stretch in the back of the calf.

Pushing against a wall will enable a greater stretch.

Bending your back knee and moving your body weight over the back leg will stretch the Soleus muscle, which lies under the main Gastrocnemius muscle.

