



Fenton Physical Therapy

400 Rounds Drive
Fenton, MI 48430
(810) 750-1996

Linden Physical Therapy

319 S. Bridge Street
Linden, MI 48451
(810) 735-0010

Milford Physical Therapy

135 S. Milford Rd
Milford, MI 48381
(248) 685-7272

Hamstrong

You Need STRONGER, not LONGER, Hamstrings



Making your hamstrings stronger will help preserve function and make you more bulletproof in the game of life.

The “hamstrings” is the collective name given to the muscles that are located on the back of the thigh. They attach to the bottom of the pelvis, ischial tuberosity, (the bone you sit on) and cross the hip and knee to connect on either side of the tibia, just below the knee. As with most of the “two joint” muscles, they are more prone to injury as they must control movement at both ends. At the knee, the hamstrings act like the reins on a horse to tell the knee to slow down, speed up, turn right, or turn left. At the hip, they work with the abdominal muscles to stabilize the pelvis (hold you upright) and, together with the gluteal muscles, they function as primary drivers of locomotion.

Hamstring pain problems are often caused by a lack of “teamwork.” When you walk or run, the hamstrings always work in tandem with the gluteal muscles. The abdominal muscles and the hamstrings work as a push-pull counterbalance to hold the pelvis stable. Unfortunately, many people have gluteal and abdominal muscles that are not firing in a coordinated manner to efficiently assist in movement. The terms that physical therapists and strength coaches use are “gluteal amnesia” and “poor core stability.” Getting your gluteal and abdominal muscles integrated into

the exercise activity is the key to reducing stress on the hamstring muscles.

Your hamstring muscles will function better with strengthening exercises that reinforce the coordinated firing of the entire team of muscles. I have three suggestions listed below. These are basic exercises that we use with physical therapy patients and fitness clients. Watch the video and give them a try.

Feet on Ball Leg Curls

The feet on ball leg curl is a good beginner, hamstring team training exercise. Many newbies get cramps in their hamstrings while performing this exercise because their gluteals are not working efficiently and the hamstrings are doing all the work.



Lay on your back with the knees extended and heels on the ball. Keep the feet pointed straight ahead and the legs together. Brace the abdominal muscles and pull the bottom of the rib cage down. Lift the hips off the floor and maintain the “bridge” position. Bend the knees and pull the ball toward you. Straighten the knees, returning to the extended position and repeat the knee bend for eight to ten repetitions. As your strength improves, you should be able to progress to the single leg version of the feet on ball leg curl.

(continued on next page)

Tubing RDL Row



The hip hinge is the most powerful movement the human body can perform. It is the pattern that allows you to hop, skip, and jump. Many people, through injury or debility, are unable to perform a proper hip hinge pattern.

Your core stabilizers, gluteals, and hamstrings all work together to create a hip hinge. This a good exercise to retrain the hip hinge pattern.

Set up resistance tubing (or a cable unit) at chest level. Stand facing the tubing with the feet shoulder width apart. Pull the hands in so the thumbs are at the armpits and the shoulder blades pulled back. Reach forward with the hands and push the hips back. The knees should bend a little and hips should hinge. Pull back up to the starting position and hold the hamstrings, abdominals, and gluteals tight for three counts. Repeat for eight to ten repetitions.

Walking Lunges

The hamstrings, gluteals, and abdominal muscles must work together to perform a graceful walking lunge. Feeding your brain a consistent habit of proper neural movement information is what keeps your body functioning at optimal levels.



Many of the long hamstring patients I see in physical therapy are unable to perform this activity.

You need a runway of 10 yards. Stand tall and step forward with the right leg so that the left knee bends to just above the floor. Stand back up using the glu-

teals and hamstrings of the right leg. Keep the torso tall and repeat with the left leg. Perform five to ten repetitions with each leg. You can add resistance with a sandbag or kettlebell held at chest level.

Bonus Exercise: Glute Ham Raise

The glute ham raise exercise is like the pull up. It takes some practice and time to become proficient but the pay off in strength and performance makes it worth the effort. This exercise is best learned with some coaching supervision.

The set up on the Glute Ham Developer bench will vary based on the length of your legs. Once you have the correct pad positions, it is always the same. The Glute Ham Developer bench has a foot hook setting that adjusts vertically and thigh pad setting that adjusts horizontally.



Align the pads so the thigh is held tight against the round pad and the feet can stay tight against the platform. A common mistake is having the knees positioned on top of the thigh pad. The calves are placed against the platform roller pads. Begin with the torso perpendicular to the floor with the knees bent. Tighten the gluteals, hamstrings, and abdominal muscles and lower under control until the torso is parallel to the floor. Do not let the spine bend. The motion should come from hinging at the hips and an extension of the knees. Keep the abdominal muscles tight and the lumbar spine stable. From this position, push the feet against the platform, tighten the hamstrings, and pull back up to the starting position. Repeat for three to ten repetitions.

-Michael O'Hara, P.T., OCS, CSCS

YouTube

Video demonstration of these exercises can be seen on our youtube channel at:
<https://youtu.be/FTQEOkAxEdY>

Additional Resources

www.fentonphysicaltherapy.com

www.fentonfitness.com

Join our email list



barb@

fentonphysicaltherapy.com

Articles, videos, health info,
and more...

BLOG

www.mikeoharapt.com

Like us!



facebook.com/FentonFitness

Watch us



youtube.com/user/FentonPT

Fight the Fat Support Group

Being overweight or obese is associated with a multitude of health issues including, but not limited to, increased risk of heart disease, Type II diabetes, certain types of cancers, low back pain, and knee pain.

The average American gains 1 lb per year after the age of thirty. They also lose on average 0.5lbs of muscle per year, so the net change in body composition on average is a 1.5lb increase in fat/year, and a 0.5lb loss in muscle/year. This equates to 15lbs of additional fat each decade, and a 5lb loss of muscle during the same time.

Here's the interesting part: **75% of this weight gain typically occurs during the six week holiday season (Thanksgiving through New**

Years). During this time, we tend to be less active and are surrounded by a multitude of calorie dense foods.

No will power? Can't say no to seconds? *Thirds?* Love pie? Like the couch more than kettlebells? Too cold to go to the gym? *Sound familiar?*

To help you survive the holidays, we have created the *Fight the Fat Support Group* series to give you useful nutrition tips along with quick and effective workouts to keep your metabolism ticking during the holidays. Stay tuned to our email, blog, and social media posts for nutrition tips and fat burning exercises.

-Jeff Tirrell, B.S., CSCS, Pn1

Give the Gift of *Fitness* this Holiday Season

Fenton Fitness Gift Certificates Make A Great Holiday Gift

What better way to show someone how much you care for them this Christmas than by getting them started on the road to better health. When you give a gift of fitness, you create an opportunity for success that can change a life. No other aspects of life can be fully enjoyed without a strong and healthy body. Many people just need a little extra encouragement to develop the exercise habit. Your gift and support can make that happen.

At Fenton Fitness, your gift will not go unused. A little guidance goes a long way and our knowledgeable staff and certified, experienced trainers will create the ideal environment for your gift recipient to change his or her life.

Gift Certificates are available at the front desk and can be purchased in any denomination for membership dues or training services. Think outside the box this Christmas and give the gift that really matters—the gift of better health!



Fenton Fitness Helps Bring Christmas To Area Children

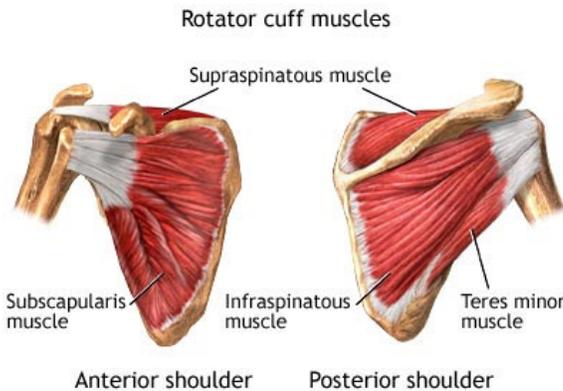


The Angels are here! Fenton Fitness is helping Fenton Rotary make Christmas possible for families in need. Open your hearts this holiday season and be the angel who brings a smile to a child on Christmas morning. See the front desk to sponsor a child. All gifts must be purchased, wrapped, and delivered to Fenton Fitness no later than Friday, December 11th. For more information, contact us at (810) 750-0351.

Cuff Tough Love

Three Things That Instantly Improve Your Rotator Cuff Training

Number One: Improve Your Posture



If you perform your rotator cuff exercises in a slumped over, rounded shoulder position, you will never be able to

properly recruit the movement pattern necessary to transfer over to better shoulder function in your daily activities. The rotator cuff muscles originate on the scapula (shoulder blade) and travel to the humerus (upper arm bone). Before starting rotator cuff exercises, stand up straight with a proud chest and the shoulder blades pulled back and down. You should feel a tightening of the muscles between the shoulder blades and the spine. The thoracic spine and rib cage is the platform upon which the shoulder operates. You may need to improve thoracic spine mobility and rib cage positioning with some dedicated mobility work and foam rolling. The fifth cervical nerve root controls the firing of the rotator cuff muscle and deltoid. If that nerve root is under any compressive load because of a forward head posture, nothing good happens at your shoulder joint.

Number Two: Slow Down

Most of the rotator cuff external and internal rotation exercises I witness in the gym are performed at tempos that are much too fast. Slow the exercise down and focus on the eccentric, or lowering portion, of the movement. Eccentric muscle loading (lengthening against resistance) has been found to produce the best results in restoring rotator cuff muscle function. A good tempo is two seconds concentric, a one second hold, and a four count eccentric. You should be able to feel the back of the shoulder as the rotator cuff muscles come under tension during the eccentric portion of the exercise. A set of ten repetitions at this tempo will take over a minute to complete. I have

shoulder patients count out loud to help them master this tempo. Slower tempos will probably require you to lower the resistance you are using. Your supraspinatus will thank you.

Number Three: Improve Isometric Shoulder Strength

Strong, efficient, and pain-free shoulder movement is a "team event." The function of the four rotator cuff muscles during movement is that of glenohumeral stabilizer. They hold, or "centrate," the humeral head on the small portion of the scapula called the glenoid. Poor control from the rotator cuff muscles allows the humeral head to travel off the glenoid and creates the impingement problems that produce pain and joint breakdown. Better isometric strength/ endurance of the rotator cuff muscles will go a long way in making your shoulder healthier. Watch the video for some of some suggestions on shoulder isometric strengthening exercises.

Bonus Suggestions

Grip the implement you are using with authority to fire up the neural pathway to the shoulder. You probably do not need to perform internal rotation strengthening exercises. Most people with shoulder joint issues are internal rotation dominant and need less and not more neural activation of the internal rotation motor pattern. Spend the extra time working on improving cervical posture and restoring thoracic spine mobility. If you have been told you have a tear in your rotator cuff, then using resistance bands or tubing for your rotator cuff strengthening exercises may not be the best choice. The resistance on the tubing becomes greater as your cuff muscle become less mechanically efficient. Try side-lying and prone rotator cuff exercises with a dumbbell instead. High repetition rows with a suspension trainer are a very beneficial exercise for the entire system that contributes to healthy, happy shoulders. Add three or four sets of 12 to 20 repetitions to your program. Watch the video and then get to work.

-Michael O'Hara, P.T., OCS, CSCS



Video for the exercises described can be seen on our youtube channel at:
https://youtu.be/xzqTK_dLcqY