

Groin Strain Advice

Groin Strain... What causes it and how do I treat it?

A groin strain or a groin pull is a tear or rupture to any one of the adductor muscles resulting in inner thigh pain. A pulled groin muscle can range from very mild to completely debilitating. Symptoms of an acute groin strain typically include a sudden sharp pain in the groin area, either in the belly of the muscle or higher. There may also be rapid swelling followed by bruising.

Pain in the groin can come from a number of causes and can be gradual onset or sudden onset. If an acute sudden onset groin injury is not treated properly it is prone to recurring and causing long term groin pain.

There are five groin muscles or adductor muscles. The pectineus, adductor brevis and adductor longus are known as the short adductors which go from the pelvis to the thigh bone) and the gracilis and adductor magnus (long adductors which go from the pelvis to the knee). The main function of the adductors is to pull the legs back towards the midline, a movement called adduction. In the real world they are used to stabilize and control the movement of the legs when running, walking, sprinting, playing football, horse riding, hurdling and any sport which requires fast changes in direction.

A rupture or tear in the muscle usually occurs when sprinting, changing direction or in rapid movements of the leg against resistance such as kicking a ball. This is especially likely if a thorough warm-up has not been undertaken first.

Treatment

Treatment for a groin strain is based around immediate first aid to stop bleeding and swelling and then restoring the muscle to full function. The following can help with the treatment of groin muscle strains:

Cold therapy

Immediate treatment for a suspected groin strain should be to apply cold therapy and compression as soon as possible to limit bleeding and swelling. The sooner a cold compress is applied to a strained groin the faster the rehabilitation process can begin. Ice or cold therapy helps stop bleeding immediately following injury and can be of benefit later in the rehabilitation process when alternated with heat.

Groin strapping

Taping or strapping the groin using elastic adhesive bandage can be done immediately after injury to provide support and compression to the injured muscle. It is also useful later in the rehabilitation program as an alternative to wearing a groin support. Strapping will often provide more support than a groin wrap but will lose its effectiveness sooner as the tape stretches naturally.

Groin supports

A groin support or compression bandage can be worn to protect the area from further injury and aid recovery. A simple tube grip type bandage is fine for the acute stage providing compression and mild support. Specialist neoprene groin wraps are available which have been shaped to fit high on the injured leg. Neoprene will retain the bodies heat

helping the healing process. A groin support can be worn to support the muscles when returning to exercise or training.

Stretching exercises

After the initial acute stage a gradual rehabilitation program consisting of stretching and strengthening exercises should begin. Stretching exercises should be pain free starting with gentle static stretches and progress through to more sports specific stretches performed dynamically.

Strengthening exercises

The aim of strengthening exercises is to gradually increase the load through the muscles. Isometric or static exercises to start with progressing to dynamic exercises with resistance band and finally sports specific running and sprint drills.

Sports massage

Massage may help after the acute stage by releasing tension in the muscle and encouraging blood flow and nutrients. Applying massage too soon may increase bleeding and make the injury worse so it is important to wait until the acute stage has passed. It can be applied very gently in the early stages on a daily basis and as the injury heals and muscles get stronger massage should be applied more deeply. However longer rest periods between sessions will be needed.

If you have questions about this Injury, feel free to ask me I the Health Club.

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