

## HAMSTRING EXERCISE

Bowenwork exercises use reciprocal innervation to minimize the influence of the stretch reflex, which often leads muscles to over tighten. As with all things related to Bowenwork, less is best. No more than 6 reps with each leg, once a day. Always start with the easier side first. These exercises should be done very s-l-o-w-l-y and very gently, “listening” with awareness. Stop any movement at the first sign of pain.

**Do NOT perform these exercises on the day of treatment, but start the following day.**

**Do once a day, every day, until your next appointment.**

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1. Hold on to something like the back of a chair or place your hand on the wall for balance.
2. Stand with feet parallel.
3. Begin with the looser leg first.
4. Start by resting the toes of the looser leg on the floor behind the heel of the weight bearing leg. (in this position, the hamstring will relax between moves).
5. Swing the leg straight forward and upward to the extent of your comfort range. Do not bend your knee or rotate your hips. Make sure no muscles above the waist are moving. It is important NOT to attempt high kicks, which would increase the likelihood of injury. In time, without striving to achieve any particular goal, the kicks WILL become progressively higher.
6. Let foot drop to the floor in a standing position.
7. Bend the knee up toward waist level.
8. Return your toes to the floor behind you as you did at the start.

Do 6 times on looser leg first, then 6 times on the other leg, once a day.

**Note:** This exercise alternately stretches and uses the hamstring muscles (as with PNF, proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation, stretches). The antagonists are the hamstrings and quadriceps. Instead of trying to stretch hamstring muscles, we are giving the brain a message to “release the hamstrings” from the inside out. These are nerve messages, using the principle of opposing muscle contraction. We contract the quads to release the hams, then swing to a subtle stretch.

