



## RECURRENT HAMSTRING PROBLEMS

### Introduction

The hamstring muscles are a group of three muscles which together make up the muscles at the back of the thigh. Injury to the hamstring muscles are common among athletes participating in sports involving sprinting and jumping.

### Common problems and causes

Hamstring strain occurs when the muscle is forced to stretch past its available length. Most hamstring strains are found to occur in that part of the running action where the hamstrings work to slow the forward leg down. This is termed the eccentric muscle contraction of the hamstrings and is where the hamstrings act to co-ordinate and control the forward movement of the shinbone.

The problem with hamstring strains is that unless recognition and correct treatment of the causative factor is performed, the athlete may experience further recurrent hamstring strains. Therefore the all too often scenario of a sports person simply resting and waiting for the muscles to repair and then resuming sport as per normal, may be insufficient to prevent further recurrence unless the predisposing factor is also addressed.

### Some of the more common predisposing factors to hamstring injury include:-

- Poor hamstring flexibility
- Hamstring weakness
- Muscle imbalance between the quadriceps muscles on the front of the thigh and the hamstring
- stiff low back
- Inadequate warm up

### Other causes of the same pain

Some other causes of pain in the back of the thigh which can mimic

hamstring strains include:-

- Referred pain from the low back
- Scar tissue impinging on the sciatic nerve which runs down the back of the thigh

### Treatment

Early treatment of a hamstring strain involves reducing any bleeding and inflammation. This requires using the RICER regime. It is then wise to seek help from a suitably qualified professional.

