

Retraining The Psoas

Recent research has changed our view of this critical muscle. We view it as a key stabilizer of both the lower back and the hip. Here is how to “wake it up.” Its not about strength, at least at first, it’s about finding the connection from the brain to the muscle. The key is isolation, trying not to overuse the hip hiking muscles, or the front of the thigh muscles. You want to use the deep groin muscles. It is subtle.

All of these exercises should be done at least 2X per day. Hold the position for 10 seconds, while breathing in and out, then relax for 2 seconds, then repeat 10 times.

1- Lie on your back. Turn the foot slightly out. Gently, slowly, suck the hip up into its socket. You want to use the inner groin muscles. You don’t want to “hike” your hip, you don’t want to overactivate your big thigh muscles. You can put your hand on your back, just above the iliac crest, to make sure you don’t hike your hip. You can push your involved heel gently into the floor. You can use breath, you can use kegeling to help you. If necessary at first you can also activate the pelvic floor and the lower abs.

1a. If you are having trouble with “hiking” your hip, prop yourself up on your elbows.

For versions 1 and 2 and 3, you can use your own arm to provide mild resistance, to help you find the muscle. Your arm pushes gently down the long axis of the thigh, as you use your groin muscle to pull in.

2- Side lying, with legs bent. This one is often the easiest to start with. Pull the hip up into the socket, directly up the line of the thigh. Don’t let your pelvis rotate backward. You can enhance this by pushing on the sore spot on your spine in a ceiling to floor direction.

3- Same principles, done sitting. You could do this watching TV, or reading, or even at a stoplight in your car. Suck the hip up into its socket; pull directly along the line of the thigh up into the groin. Don’t let your pelvis rotate

4- Standing. Stand up, load into the other foot, gently activate your core. On the side you are working on, pretend you have a stone under your heel. Suck the hip up, and lift the heel, just half an inch, leaving the toes on the ground.

You will probably be told to focus on one side. You can do the exercise on the other side, especially if it is hard for you to “find” the muscle on the involved side.

5- Integration.

A- Lying on your back, legs straight, begin by sucking up the hip into its socket. Then slide the leg up toward the groin. You are starting with a straight leg, ending up with the leg bent, about 45 degrees.

B- Bent leg version (hook lying). Again, first suck hip into socket, then gently lift the bent leg up 45 degrees