

# Gluteal Strain

## What is a gluteal strain?

Your gluteal muscles are the muscles in your buttocks. A strained muscle is when the muscle fibers are stretched or torn.

## How does it occur?

A gluteal strain usually occurs with running or jumping. It is often seen in hurdlers or dancers.

## What are the symptoms?

A gluteal strain causes pain in the buttocks. You may have pain when walking up or down stairs and pain when sitting. You have pain moving your leg backward.

## How is it diagnosed?

Your health care provider will examine your hips, buttocks, and legs and find that you have tenderness in the gluteal muscles.

## How is it treated?

Initially, you should put ice packs on your injury for 20 to 30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours for 2 or 3 days or until the pain goes away. Your health care provider may prescribe an anti-inflammatory medication. You will be given a set of rehabilitation exercises.

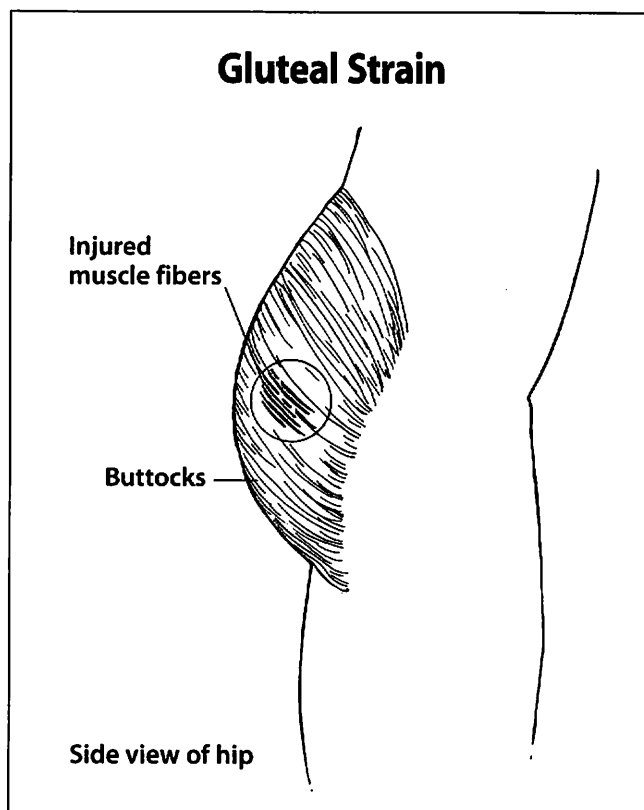
While you are recovering from your injury, you will need to change your sport or activity to one that does not make your condition worse. For example, if running causes you pain, change to swimming.

## When can I return to my sport or activity?

The goal of rehabilitation is to return you to your sport or activity as soon as is safely possible. If you return too soon you may worsen your injury, which could lead to permanent damage. Everyone recovers from injury at a different rate. Return to your sport or activity will be determined by how soon the injured area recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been since your injury occurred. In general, the longer you have symptoms before you start treatment, the longer it will take to get better.

You may safely return to your sport or activity when, starting from the top of the list and progressing to the end, each of the following is true:

- ▶ You have full range of motion on the injured side compared to the uninjured side.
- ▶ You have full strength of the injured side compared to the uninjured side.
- ▶ You can jog straight ahead without pain or limping.
- ▶ You can sprint straight ahead without pain or limping.
- ▶ You can do 45-degree cuts, first at half-speed, then at full-speed.
- ▶ You can do 20-yard figures-of-eight, first at half-speed, then at full-speed.
- ▶ You can do 90-degree cuts, first at half-speed, then at full-speed.



- ▶ You can do 10-yard figures-of-eight, first at half-speed, then at full-speed.
- ▶ You can jump on both legs without pain and you can jump on the leg on the injured side without pain.

### ***How can a gluteal strain be prevented?***

Gluteal strains are best prevented by warming up properly and doing stretching exercises before your activity.

## **Gluteal Strain Rehabilitation Exercises**

You can stretch your gluteal muscles using the first 2 exercises right away.

**1. SINGLE KNEE TO CHEST STRETCH:** Lie on your back with your legs straight out in front of you. Bring one knee up to your chest and grasp the back of your thigh. Pull your knee toward your chest, stretching your buttock muscle. Hold this position for 15 to 30 seconds and return to the starting position. Repeat 3 times on each side.



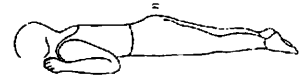
**2. STANDING HAMSTRING STRETCH:** Place the heel of your leg on a stool about 15 inches high. Keep your knee straight. Lean forward, bending at the hips until you feel a mild stretch in the back of your thigh. Make sure you do not roll your shoulders and bend at the waist when doing this or you will stretch your lower back instead. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.



You can begin strengthening your gluteal muscles as soon as the sharp pain goes away and you only have a dull ache when doing the gluteal isometrics exercise.

**3. GLUTEAL ISOMETRICS:** Lie on your stomach with your legs straight out behind you. Squeeze your buttock muscles together and hold for 5 seconds. Release. Do 3 sets of 10.

You can begin strengthening your gluteal muscles as soon as the sharp pain goes away and you only have a dull ache when doing the gluteal isometrics exercise.



After gluteal isometrics become easier, you can do the next 3 gluteal strengthening exercises.

**4. PRONE HIP EXTENSION:** Lie on your stomach with your legs straight out behind you. Tighten up your buttocks muscles and lift one leg off the floor about 8 inches. Keep your knee straight. Hold for 5 seconds. Then lower your leg and relax. Do 3 sets of 10.



**5. RESISTED HIP EXTENSION:** Stand facing a door with elastic tubing tied around the ankle on your injured side. Knot the other end of the tubing and shut the knot in the door. Pull your leg straight back, keeping your knee straight. Make sure you do not lean forward. Do 3 sets of 10.



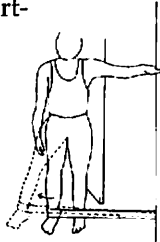
To challenge yourself, move farther away from the door so the tubing provides more resistance.

**6. HIP ABDUCTION (WITH ELASTIC TUBING):**

Stand sideways near a doorway with your uninjured side closest to the door. Tie elastic tubing around the ankle on your injured side. Knot the other end of the tubing and close the knot in the door. Extend your leg out to the side, keeping your knee straight. Return to the starting position. Do 3 sets of 10.

To challenge yourself, move farther away from the door.

After the gluteal strengthening exercises become easy, strengthen your buttock muscles by doing lunges.



**7. LUNGES:** Stand and take a large step forward with the leg on your injured side. Dip the knee on the uninjured side down toward the floor and bend the leg on your injured side. Return to the starting position.

Repeat the exercise, this time stepping forward with the leg on your uninjured side and dipping the leg on the injured side down. Do 3 sets of 10 on each side.

