

PSOAS STRETCHES



Directions

1. Grab a Stretch-Out Strap, a towel, a rope, two belts fastened together—whatever.
2. Loop one end around one of your feet and hold the other in the same side hand
3. Lie on the edge of your bed with one leg planted on the ground and the other flat on the bed and parallel to the edge of the bed. The one on the bed should be the one that the strap is looped around.
4. Prop your torso up on your elbows.
5. Scoot the planted foot as far forward (toward your head) as possible. Doing so, you might feel a hamstring stretch in the planted leg.
6. Pull on the strap, bringing your foot toward your shoulder blades. Hold 30 seconds and repeat for each leg as needed.



Tips

1. You will feel the iliopsoas stretch on the front of the hip of the leg that is on the bed (right where your pant pocket would be).
2. If, instead, or in addition to this iliopsoas stretch sensation, you feel a psoas stretch on the front of the thigh of the leg that's on the bed, that's your **quadriceps** muscle group being stretched. This is good and bad. It's bad because it means that your **quadriceps** is tight. It's good because you're stretching it out. In the event that your quad is tight, you're not going to get your foot anywhere near your butt (as in the picture below), but don't worry about it. You can do quad stretches to supplement your psoas stretch.
3. Tuck your tailbone under. This will increase the iliopsoas stretch. Stay propped up high on your elbows to protect the back from misalignment and increase the iliopsoas stretch.
4. Don't forget to move your planted leg forward as far as possible before doing the iliopsoas stretch. One of the keys to this iliopsoas stretch is the differential between the relative angles of the femurs (i.e. one leg super far back and one super far forward, like a hurdler).

Tips to Avoid A Tight Psoas. There are several ways to stop your Psoas turning into a hazardous plank of wood. All of which are easy to implement and should be even if you don't suffer from back pain yet. Here goes...

- **Postural Corrections.** If we stay in a certain position all day, our tissues will want to move into that resting position, in this case, your Psoas. The best sitting posture is one that always changes.
- **Sit Back in Your Chair.** This will stop you leaning forward as much, and thus your Psoas won't be in as shortened position in comparison to when you sit on the edge of your seat.
- **Stop Hooking Your Feet under Your Chair.** You put yourself in more hip flexion and therefore, more Psoas activation. Set your feet flat on the floor, or a raised platform if you are a shortie.
- **Stand Up When Performing Exercises.** You sit all day at work and keep your Psoas shortened. Do the opposite in the gym. Instead of the bike, get on the treadmill. Sub in Overhead Press instead of Seated Press.
- **Stop Sleeping on Your Stomach.** When you are on your stomach, your back goes into hyperextension. This is exacerbating what a tight Psoas already does to your back (anterior tilt). Change it up.
- **Move More.** Not staying in a seated position all day will go a long way to stopping you developing a tight Psoas. Get up more frequently, stretch more often, change positions... just keep moving!

Tips To Loosen A Tight Psoas. If you do suffer from low back pain and you suspect a tight Psoas, relax (maybe your Psoas will follow the lead), read the next few tips, and get cracking.

1. Stretch. Add Psoas and Hip Flexor stretches after your workouts. Get out of your chair at work occasionally and do some stretches. Do some at night before you go to bed. You can do this one:



2. Release. The most effective way to loose your Psoas is through a therapist. But you can do it yourself using a ball slightly larger & softer than a tennis ball. This massage technique releases your Psoas through an active range of motion.

- Lay on the ball, about 1-2 inches outside your belly button.
- You'll feel your Psoas respond as you lower yourself. It will hurt a little.
- Arch your back; come up onto your elbows. This will result in a more forceful stretch and release on your Psoas.

3. Activate Your Glutes. Active glutes will help inhibit and relax your Psoas. Here are some exercises you can integrate into your warm-up, or do in your main program to help fire up your glutes and loosen your Psoas.

- Overhead Lunges. Stretch and glute exercise.
- Single Leg Bridge with Knee lift. Lifted knee stretches opposite Psoas.

