

Hamstrings



Pyramid Pose: Separate the legs 3 feet apart, keeping the back heel on the ground and all 10 toes facing forward. If the hamstrings are very tight, the front knee may bend slightly. Press the hip of the front leg back so that the hips become square. Using blocks will allow you to feel the stretch but placing your hands on your hips or behind the back will activate the hamstring to strengthen at the same time. Keep the deep core muscles engaged so that the back does not round. Hold 5-10 breaths then switch sides.



Use a strap or belt to pull your foot towards your torso. If your hamstrings are very tight, there may be a slight bend in the knee. Press the ball of the foot into the strap for a deeper hamstring stretch or let the strap pull the ball downward for a calf stretch. Keep both hips & shoulders relaxed on the floor. Hold 20-30 seconds then switch sides.



Half Happy Baby: Extend the (Left) leg on the mat, flexing the heel and placing the (Left) hand on the (Left) hip. Bring the (Right) knee towards the chest, extending the calf at a 90° angle. If your hand does not reach the outside of your foot, use a strap or belt to modify. Press the ball of your foot into your hand or strap while you pull the knee towards the armpit. Hold 10-20 seconds then switch sides.



Half Splits: Use the blocks (or something sturdy such as a water bottle) to support your upper body. Begin in a kneeling position then extend the (Right) leg forward. Keep the (Left) hip directly over the (Left) knee and press the (Right) hip back to keep the hips square. Maintain a straight back as you slowly bend and straighten the knee; it is okay if the leg does not straighten fully, just keep the hip pressing back.



Downward Facing Dog can be a great hamstring stretch but often requires a modification to do properly, especially if the hamstrings are very tight. Use of the blocks is the best way to modify; see the Downward Facing Dog pdf for specific alignment cues.