

PERFORMED BY KATHERINE @CONSCIOUSKATHERINE

UNLOCK YOUR
HIPS AND PELVIS
FOR BETTER
MOVEMENT AND
PERFORMANCE

PSOAS RELEASE

The psoas (pronounced so-as) is the deepest muscle in our body and is the only muscle that connects our spine to our legs.



The body's power plant

The psoas (together with the iliacus – known collectively as the iliopsoas) is a powerful hip flexor, which means it flexes the hip joint and lifts the upper legs towards the body, which is the primary movement when you walk, run or climb stairs.

The psoas also plays a major role in spinal stabilisation to hold us upright and for balance.

As we generate most of our power through our pelvis and core, a healthy, flexible psoas allows our hips to function freely without restriction, which translates into better movement and performance.

Psoas tension can cause issues

A tight psoas will often present as lower back or sacroiliac joint pain, and may cause conditions such as sciatica, disc problems, scoliosis, hip degeneration, knee pain, digestive problems, heartburn and even jaw problems.

Weakness or tightness in your hip flexors can also lead to compensation injuries in the knees, hips and lower back, including Achilles degeneration, hip bursitis and hamstring strains. These injuries are generally caused by muscle imbalances that stem from compensatory movements.

And the psoas shares fascial connections with the diaphragm. A tight psoas tends to pull down on the diaphragm, which prevents its full bellowing action and can affect our breathing. This, in turn, will prevent us from breathing deeply to get sufficient oxygen to working muscles.

In addition, weak glute muscles and abdominals and tight adductors all cause the psoas to contract and can limit its optimal biomechanical function.



→ ANATOMY 1.0

The psoas looks similar to an upside down chicken wishbone – it attaches onto the spine at T12 and onto all lumbar vertebrae (L1 to L5). It runs down through your abdominal cavity and attaches onto the inner thigh bone or femur.

STRETCH

One way to help stretch and adjust tone through the psoas is the constructive rest position. In this position, the psoas is free to relax, so it can often bring relief from backache and help maintain pelvic stability.

HOW TO DO IT: Lie on the floor with your feet up on the couch or bed, with a 90-degree angle between your hips and thighs and thighs and calves.

Another approach is to do Forrest Yoga with its emphasis on pelvic function, stability and psoas tonal health.

You can also perform a few stretches and drills at home or before a workout to loosen this important muscle to improve performance and reduce your injury risk: [\(turn page>\)](#)

The psoas (pronounced so-as)

AT HOME STRETCH DRILLS

Form tip:

Keep your heel flat on the ground throughout the movement.



HALF-KNEELING PSOAS STRETCH

HOW TO DO IT: Drop down into a half-kneeling position. Position the foot of your leading leg beyond your knee. Extend the hip of your rear leg by pushing your hips forward. Hold the stretch for 60-90 seconds. From this split kneeling position, lean forward and drive your leading knee over your toes. Pause for a second at the end of your range of movement, then return to the starting position and repeat. **Perform 5 thrusts on each side. Repeat the entire sequence with the other leg.**



→ WHY IT MATTERS

Weakness or tightness in your hip flexors can also lead to compensation injuries in the knees, hips and lower back, including Achilles degeneration, hip bursitis and hamstring strains. These injuries are generally caused by muscle imbalances that stem from compensatory movements.

COUCH STRETCH

HOW TO DO IT: Back one bent leg up against a wall, box, bench or your couch so that your shin is flush with the surface. Step the other leg forward into a lunge position, with the knee at 90 degrees. Keep your glutes engaged as you drive the front of the hip toward the ground and raise your torso into the upright position. **Maintain this position for 60 seconds or more. Swap legs and repeat.**



COBRA STRETCH

HOW TO DO IT: From a high plank position, lower your torso to the ground. Keep your hips in contact with the floor as you exhale and extend your arms to press your chest up. Look up when you reach the cobra pose. Push your chest forward and your navel down. **Hold the stretch for 60-90 seconds.**

Form tip:

You can keep a slight bend in your elbows, and keep your shoulders away from your ears.

HIGH LUNGE

HOW TO DO IT:

Stand upright. Step your left foot forward, aligning your knee over the heel. Keep your right leg extended and torso upright, lengthening your tailbone toward the floor. As you step, sweep your arms wide to the sides and raise them overhead so your palms face each other. **Keep your chest up and look up toward your thumbs.** Hold the pose for 30-60 seconds before repeating with the other leg.



Form tip:

Do not to overarch your lower back.

MOVES

1. HALF-KNEELING
2. COUCH STRETCH
3. HIGH LUNGE
4. COBRA STRETCH
5. GLUTE BRIDGE

GLUTE BRIDGE

HOW TO DO IT:

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart. Pull your heels in close to your sit bones. Plant your feet firmly on the floor with pressure through the big toe and inner heel. Lift your pelvis and push up through your tailbone to extend your hips into a posterior pelvic tilt position. Keep your thighs parallel throughout the pose to prevent your hips from externally rotating. **Hold the stretch for 30-60 seconds and repeat up to three times.** 