

MUSCLE STRAIN — HIP & THIGH

Adductor (Groin) Strain

Understanding your injury and getting back to full speed

WHAT IS IT?

The adductors are the inner-thigh muscles that pull the leg toward the midline. The adductor longus, near its origin on the pubic bone, is the usual site of a “groin pull.”

A **strain** means muscle fibers were overstretched. We grade strains I–III: **Grade I** — mild, microscopic fiber injury; **Grade II** — moderate, a partial tear with strength loss; **Grade III** — severe, complete disruption.

HOW IT HAPPENS

Cutting, side-to-side movement, skating strides, or a forceful kick — classic in hockey, soccer, and football.

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE

Inner-thigh or groin pain with pushing off, side-lunging, or squeezing the legs together; tenderness high on the inner thigh.

HOW LONG RECOVERY TAKES

- **Grade I:** 1–2 weeks
- **Grade II:** 3–6 weeks
- **Grade III:** 8+ weeks; chronic groin pain lasting beyond that deserves evaluation for athletic pubalgia (“sports hernia”) or hip joint problems

TREATMENT

Almost all muscle strains heal without surgery. For the first 72 hours: relative rest, ice 15–20 minutes several times daily, compression, and *gentle* motion — complete rest slows healing. Then a progressive program: pain-free motion → isometrics → strengthening → **eccentric loading** (strengthening the muscle while it lengthens — the phase that prevents re-injury) → sport-specific work.

Progressive adduction strengthening (ball squeezes → Copenhagen adduction exercise) with core stabilization; the Copenhagen program roughly halves groin-injury risk in field athletes.

RETURNING TO SPORT

Return when strength is at least **90% of the other side**, motion is full and pain-free, and you can perform your sport’s movements at full speed without hesitation. Returning before the muscle is re-strengthened is the main cause of re-injury.

PREVENTING THE NEXT ONE

Preseason adductor strengthening and gradual buildup of skating/cutting volume.

WHEN TO CALL US

Groin pain with coughing or sneezing, pain radiating into the lower abdomen, or numbness — these point away from a simple strain.

CALL THE OFFICE RIGHT AWAY

Pain not controlled by medication, fever over 101.5°F, spreading redness or warmth, or new numbness or weakness. Direct office line (513) 441-5639; after hours (513) 354-3700.



SCAN FOR THE LATEST VERSION ONLINE

robertpettitmd.com/handouts/adductor-strain.pdf

This handout is for general patient education and does not replace personalized medical advice. Always follow the specific instructions given by Dr. Pettit and your care team.