

MUSCLE STRAIN — HIP & THIGH

Gluteal Strain

Understanding your injury and getting back to full speed

WHAT IS IT?

The gluteal muscles (maximus, medius, minimus) power hip extension and stabilize the pelvis. Strains are less common than other hip strains and often accompany overload from deadlifting, hill running, or jumping.

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

Heavy lifting, uphill sprinting, bounding, or a slip with the leg extended.

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE

Buttock pain with climbing stairs, standing from sitting, single-leg stance, or running; tenderness in the muscle rather than on the bone.

HOW LONG RECOVERY TAKES

- **Grade I:** 1–2 weeks
- **Grade II:** 3–6 weeks
- **Grade III:** 6–10 weeks

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.

Glute bridging → single-leg progressions → hip-hinge strengthening; address pelvic control and running form.

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

Progressive loading of hill/jump volume; glute activation work before heavy lifting.

WHEN TO CALL US

Pain radiating down the leg with numbness or tingling suggests the sciatic nerve or the low back rather than a muscle strain; deep buttock pain with sitting deserves review.

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/gluteal-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.