

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

Groin Strain



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A strain is the term used to describe the stretching or tearing of a muscle or tendon (located at the ends of muscles where it attaches to bone). A groin strain applies to the muscles around your groin and the most commonly affected are known as your adductors. There are five adductors in total (Figure 1). Adductor strains occur when sudden contraction is applied to the muscle(s) whilst it is in a stretched position. The most commonly injured is the adductor longus muscle.

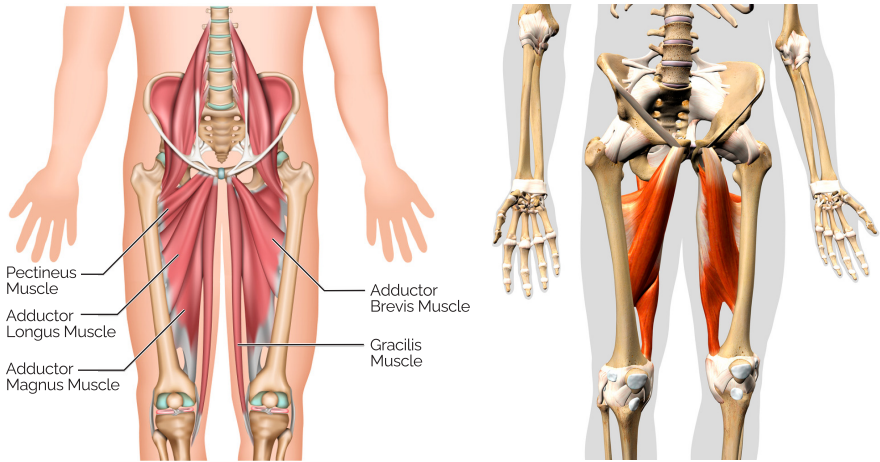


Figure 1

Illustration of the five groin muscles demonstrating where they begin and end on a front view (left) and on an angled three-dimensional view (right).

Causes

An injury generally occurs during sporting activities that involve sudden changes in direction, jumping and/or kicking. Other contributory factors include:

- Failure to warm-up and stretch adequately before physical activity.
- Intense training over short-period of time leading to overuse or repetitive stress on muscles.
- Previous groin strain.

Symptoms

You may experience the following:

- A 'popping' sensation within your groin or inner side of your thigh followed by bruising in the area.
- Groin pain and pain along the inner side of your thigh.
- A 'pulling' sensation in your groin.
- Limping.
- Worsening of the pain when bringing your knees together or when raising your knee.

Diagnosis

The diagnosis of this condition is mainly a clinical one but you may be sent for investigations such as x-rays to rule out a bony avulsion injury and/or scans of your hip/thigh to confirm the diagnosis and grade the severity of your injury. Occasionally, investigations may identify a different reason for your groin pain.

Treatment

▫ Ice Packs

Apply over area of pain several times daily for a period of 15 minutes each time.

▫ Anti-inflammatory medication

Oral anti-inflammatories can help with the pain and swelling that occurs in the early stages of this injury. Anti-inflammatories may have adverse side-effects if you have certain medical conditions or take certain medications so please consult with your GP prior to commencing.

▫ Activity modification

Avoid all aggravating activities in the initial phase. Consider pre-exercise stretching routine and building activities up in a graduated fashion once pain is under control.

▫ Physiotherapy

Aimed at hip adductor and abductor stretches following by strengthening. Work on abdominal muscle can also be helpful.

- **Shockwave therapy**

Non-invasive treatment aimed at delivering shockwaves to the injured muscle/tendon with the aim of promoting its healing. There is some evidence to suggest this can facilitate a faster return to activity.

- **Cortico-steroid injections**

This involves an injection of a powerful anti-inflammatory medication into the area of concern with image-guidance.

- **Surgery**

In severe injuries in which the tendon is completely avulsed from the bone and non-operative treatment has failed, surgical re-attachment of the tendon may be required to assist with return to normal function.

Outcome

Most groin strains are successfully managed without surgery and the majority of patients can return to their pre-injury levels of activity when following a graduated rehabilitation programme.



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