

OPEN THE HIPS LIVE BETTER

A starter for optimal hip function

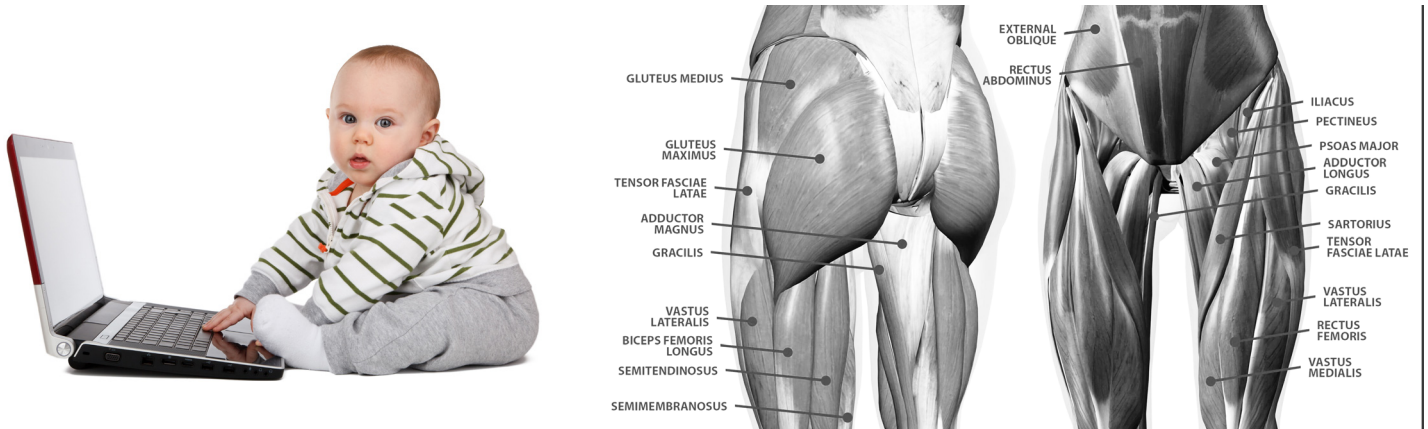
Marc Mangan Fit

The hips have a great deal to do with how we move from day-to-day. Performing self-care for the hips will not only help athletes, but it will help the general population as well.

Unfortunately, we have become a “stand to rest” society instead of “sitting to rest”.

We spend more time sitting these days than ever before. This causes problems through the hip flexors and different parts of the spine leading to muscle imbalances. Not only does this raise the chance of injury, but it can be the cause of every day aches and pains. Fortunately, tight hip flexors aren't permanent.

Just spending a little time a week on hip mobility and flexibility can battle the every day stresses we are putting on our bodies.



The following stretches and exercises can get you moving in the right direction. The goal is to move towards more dynamic and advanced hip movement work after. If any of the exercises are too difficult, begin with the movements you feel comfortable with. If you're in pain, it is always best to see a healthcare professional to diagnose the issue. Implement this into your daily life for 30 days 3-4x a week.

Directions For This Program

For this program you will...

- 1. First, start with stretches to loosen any tightness you may be experiencing. These stretches will target the hip flexors, the glutes, and the groin.
- 2. Secondly, We will then move to a couple myofascial release techniques.
- 3. Thirdly, we will do a series of mobility work to get more movement through the hips.

Stretches:

Start easy and do 2 rounds at :20 for each side of the body for static stretches and do 2-3 rounds of 20 movements for active stretches (any stretch with movement). It is important to ease into a stretch first, especially if you're tight in a certain area. Hold for the entire :20 and breathe through the stretch.

Self-Myofascial Release:

Only apply as much pressure as you can manage. Once you are comfortable you can apply more pressure.

Mobility Exercises:

Test an exercise position before starting a movement and make sure that you'll be able to do it. Ease into the movements working to get a little further each move. You will do 2 sets of 10-20 movements each exercise.

Tools

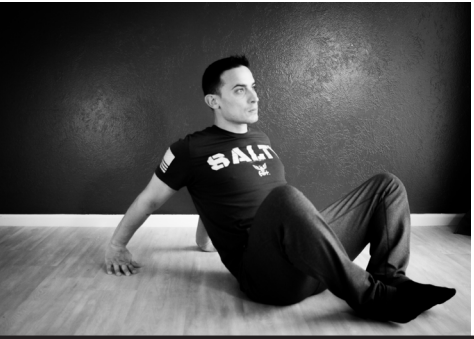
Foam Roller

Lacrosse Ball, Racquet Ball, Tennis Ball

Yoga Mat or Blanket

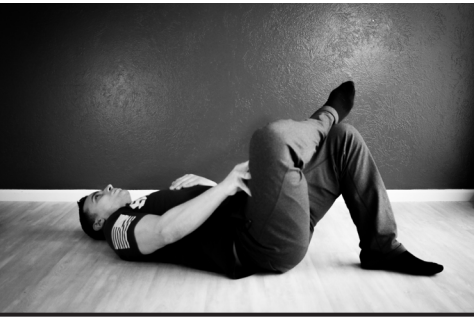
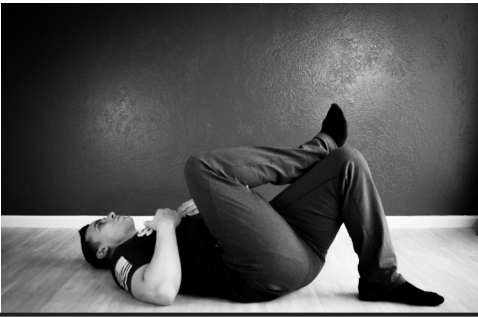
Pillow or Pad

Step 1: Stretches to Target Tight Areas



1. Traveling Butterfly Primer

Start with hands on floor and legs straight with good posture. Lift your glutes up pinning your feet to the ground. Move your glutes forward to your feet. Then back to 1 and repeat 20x. Try to get slightly further each time. **2 sets.**



2. Supine Hip Rotation

Start laying on your back. Fold one leg over the other. Push your knee away from you and then bring it towards your stomach. Keep core engaged with low back against ground. **Repeat 20x each 2-3 sets .**

3. Pigeon Stretch

Cross one leg under you on the floor. The other leg stretched out behind you. Keep chest big and back straight. Walk your hands forward until stretch begins. Hold and breath for 20 seconds then reach further and hold another 20 seconds. Switch legs. **1 set.**



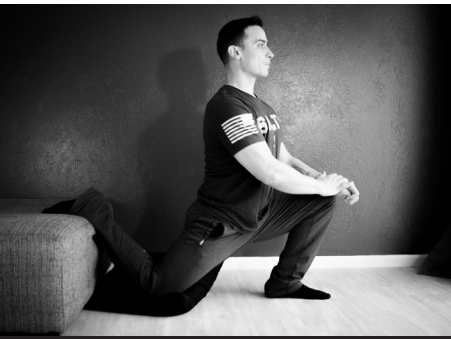
4. Lateral Lunge Stretch

Face both feet forward. Lean to one side of body pushing hips back towards the wall. Keep weight on full foot. Straighten the opposite leg and keep chest big (back straight). Keep knee behind toe on bent leg. Ease into it breathe and hold for 20 seconds. Switch legs. **Repeat on both sides 2x.**



5. Couch Stretch

Rest foot to ankle on couch. Put a pillow or mat under your knee for support so you don't crush the knee cap. Put the other foot out in front of you and push your hips forward to stretch the hip flexors. If this is easy for you, raise the arm on the down-leg (my right arm in photo) and reach for the sky. If you are tight here, ease into the lean. **Hold for 20 seconds then lean more forward for another 20 seconds.**

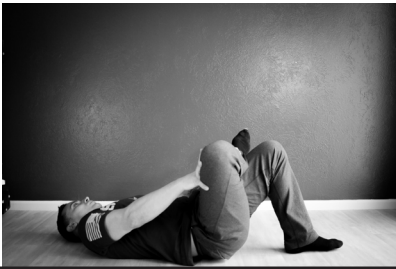
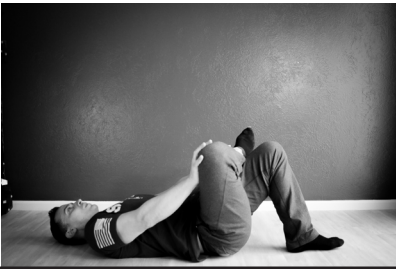
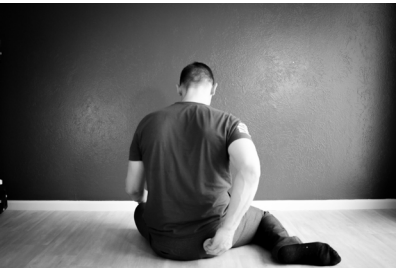


Step 2: Pin, Rotate and Move

1. Lacrosse Ball Pin and Roll Glute

Take a lacrosse ball, tennis ball, or racquet-ball (racquetball will be more pliable though) and place it under your gluteus maximus. Lay down on the ball with as much pressure you can manage. Take one leg and cross over the opposite Quad. Take your hand and push the knee away from you. Roll on the ball from side to side. As you get more comfortable, you can apply more bodyweight for pressure. Roll back and forth **10-20 times each side. 1-2 sets.**

You can always wrap a lacrosse ball with cloth to make it softer.



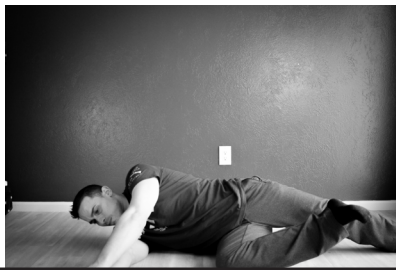
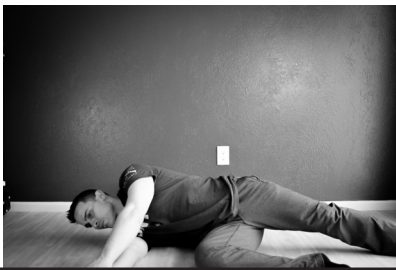
2. Gluteus Medius Pin and Stretch

Take a lacrosse ball, tennis ball, or racquet-ball (racquetball will be more pliable though) and place it under your gluteus medius.

Roll onto your side with the ball pinned. Tuck the leg closest to floor into a 90 degree angle.

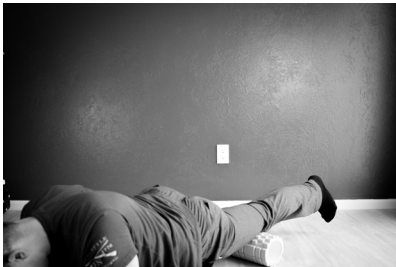
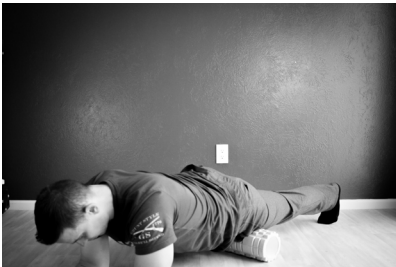


Keep The top-leg straight. Rotate your shin and foot on the down-leg at the knee up to the sky and hold. You should feel pressure where the ball is pinned. Hold that position for 3 deep breaths. Release. Repeat for **10x each side. 1-2 sets.**



3. Foam Rolling The Quadriceps

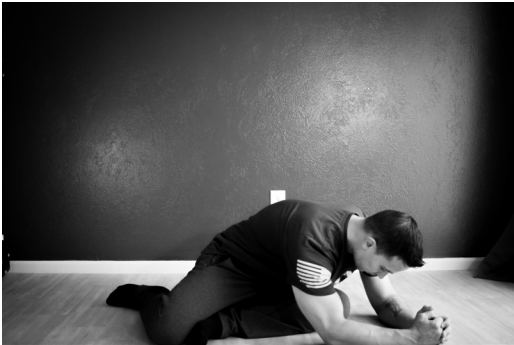
Lay on the foam roller starting at the top of your thigh. Bend the other leg positioning your foot where you have leverage. Using your forearms and the bent leg, move the foam roller down towards the bottom of thigh and return back up. **Roll 10-20 times and repeat on next leg. 1 set.**



Step 3: Mobilize

1. Shin Box and Dynamic Stretch

Start sitting in good posture. One leg crossed in front of you and the opposite leg crossed behind you. This is the shin box position.



Next, lean forward over your front leg. You will feel a stretch in your glute. Pause for a moment. Then lean backwards into a semi-sprinter stretch. Puase for a moment and return to the seated position. **Repeat this 10-20 times and switch legs. 1-2 sets.**

If for some reason this position is uncomfortable, work into it over time.



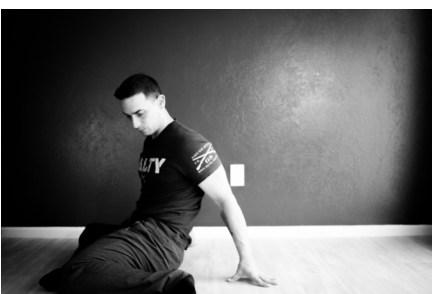
2. Shin Box Rotations

Start in the seated position same as the above dynamic stretch. Now you will pin your feet and your glutes to the ground. It is important to leave your feet and glutes pinned so they don't drag through the motion.



Next, you will lift your knees off the ground and switch your knees to the other position. The opposite leg will now be in front and the other in back.

You can utilize your arms and lean back in order to do the motion correctly if you are tight in this position. Only lean back as much as is still slightly difficult.

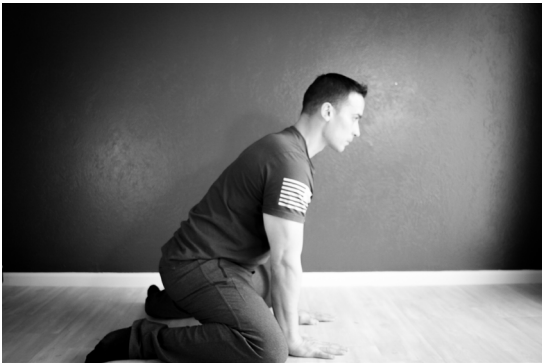


It will be incredibly important to utilize your core for support and strength through the movement. Overtime, you will work to not use your arms for support as in the bottom two photos. **Do 2 Sets of 10 switches.**

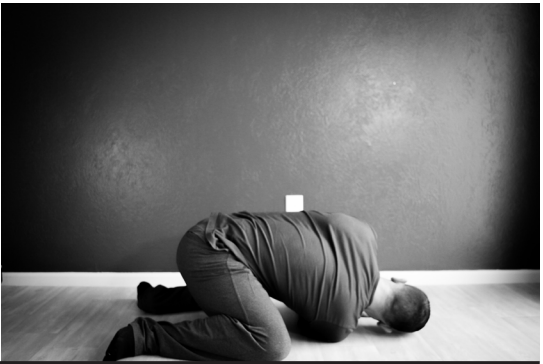


3. Thread The Needle

Use a yoga mat or blanket. Start with your knees on the ground in more of a frog pose position. Rock back and forth in your hips to loosen up a bit. If this position is tight, straighten your feet instead of having them sideways.



Next, you will take one of your arms, drop your chest to the ground, and reach through bringing your shoulder to the ground. Reach as far as comfortable. Come back to position one and then repeat with the other arm. This will also work on your T-spine, so you will need to feel out how far you can go with this. Over time, try and get lower to the floor with a longer reach. **Do 2 sets of 10 reach throughs.**

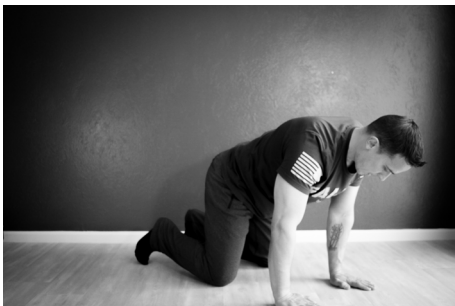
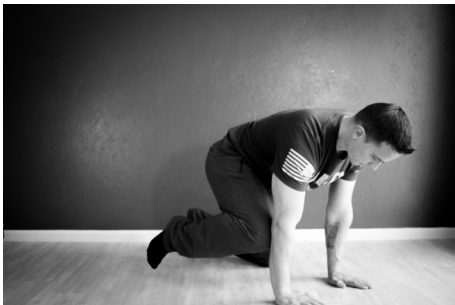
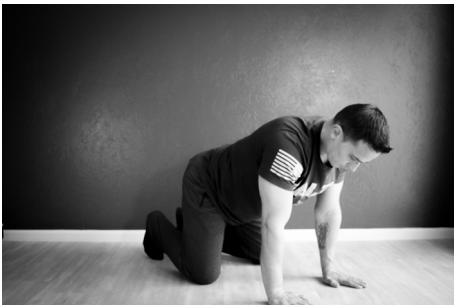


4. Hip Circles

Start in the quadruped position with hands and knees on the ground.

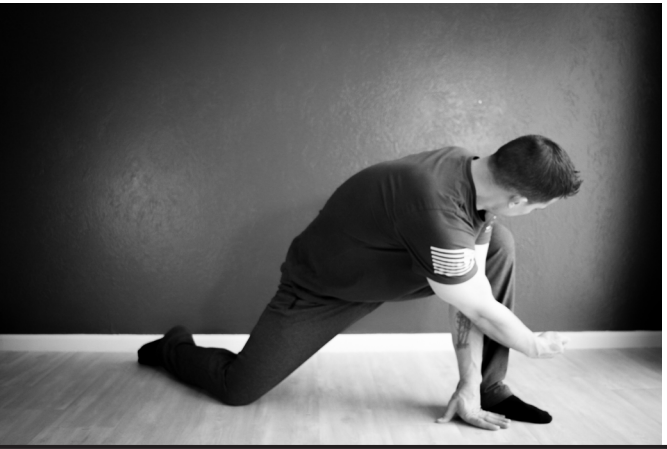
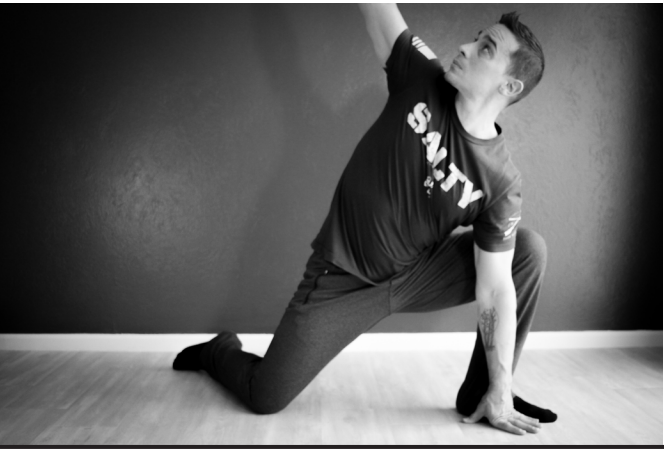
Keep your core engaged and back straight. Try to keep this position through the movement.

Take one knee and touch your elbow directly in front of that leg. Rotate from the hip as high out to the side as you can go. This will and should feel slightly tight. Then still rotating at the hip, bring the leg as high as you can in the rear without flexing the spine and back down to position one. **Repeat this on the next leg. 2-3 sets of 10-20 rotations.**



5. Hip Flexor T-Spine Reach

Start with one leg forward in the kneeling position till you feel a stretch through the hip flexors. Take your elbow and press against the inside of the thigh and knee. While pushing against the thigh with the down arm, rotate the opposite arm to the sky. Bring that arm back through to the opposite side. **Do this 10-20 time 2 sets.**



6. Deep Squats

This will be an exercise you'll want to test first. A good way to do this is to just do a squat. How far can you get down without flexing the spine? How far can you go before your knees cave in or you roll onto your toes? If you **can't** do a squat, do this instead. Put your back against the wall with your feet about a foot away from the wall. Slide down the wall into a squat position to the point you can go. Next, take your straight arms and push your knees away from you. Feel this out slowly if you are doing this for the first time.



If you **are** able to get in a squat position when you initially try, then give this a shot. Squat down as comfortably as you can with a straight back. Get as low as your body will allow and push your knees apart. If your back flexes, you are rolling onto the toes instead of your full foot remaining on ground, then start in a slightly higher position and work down to this position over time.



These exercises and stretches should get you on your way to more efficient movement through the hips. Everything depends on your starting level. If you have any questions or want to chat, feel free to contact me!

marcmangan.com