

Psoas Self Release with a Wedge Block

The psoas is the major that flexes the thigh at the hip. It attaches to the lumbar spine (low back). The psoas crosses inside the abdomen and the pelvis to attach to the femur or thigh bone just below and inside the bony projection of the pelvis called the anterior inferior iliac spine (ASIS). When the psoas contracts it bends the hip joint upward and forward, flexing the thigh on the pelvis.

If the psoas is in spasm or is too tight, we cannot straighten the leg out flat when we lie on our back. When we stand it won't let us stand fully erect on the tight side. If both psoas muscles are tight, we stand bent forward at the waist. If one psoas is tight it will contribute to low back pain in that side. If both psoas muscles are tight, we stand bent forward at the waist and can't stand straight or we develop an increased low back curve and the buttocks are pushed backwards. Both situations cause lower back pain and pain in the groin.

One major cause of tight psoas muscles is sitting too much of the time. The muscles and their tendons shorten and can no longer extend to their full length.

Gently lengthening the psoas provides significant relief. When the shortening is chronic, the best solution will involve daily stretching for at least six weeks. The method we have found best is performed on a flat surface using a **yoga wedge block**. You can find them on Amazon for less than \$15 for two blocks.

To perform this passive stretch lie on your back on a firm bed, table or the floor.

Insert the wedge block thin edge under the buttock on the affected side. The wedge part of the block should be pointing towards the opposite shoulder. Your sitzbone (ischial tuberosity) is at the bottom of the buttocks and the top of the thigh. It is the pelvic attachment for the



hamstrings (the muscles on the back of the thigh). The sitzbone sits on the highest part of the wedge where it joins the thick part of the block.

Resting your hip on the wedge, straighten your leg out in line with your body. Rest for a couple of minutes.

Remove the block and do the same for the other side of the body if it needs release and lengthening too.



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