

# Stretches for the Hip & Upper Thigh

**Purpose:** To improve mobility in the hip and stretch the hip flexors

**Target Muscles:** Hip flexors and extenders

**Equipment Needed:** Exercise mat (optional)

**Start:** Begin kneeling with your knees hip width apart and tops of the feet resting on the floor. Use a mat for cushioning if performing this stretch on a hard surface. Arms should be resting at your sides with the palms and fingers relaxed. Roll the shoulders back slightly to open the chest and lift the rib cage for optimal posture.

**Low Lunge:** Step one foot out in front to create a low-lunge. The front knee should align over the ankle and not surpass your toes. Extend the arms through the front of the body to raise overhead as you press down into the back hip for a deep hip flexor stretch. Keep the chest lifted and maintain posture as you gently retract the shoulder blades. Hold the stretch 10-30 seconds. Breathe deeply through the stretch, counting slowly to four for each inhalation and exhalation.

**Rotation:** Keep the hips aligned and feet positioned in the low-lunge. Bring the arms down and across the body. Rotate the torso so that the chest is open to the same side as the raised thigh. The front hand will rest on the outside of the raised leg, and the back hand extends towards the heel behind you. Hold this stretch 10-30 seconds, breathing deeply throughout.

**Repeat:** Shift the front foot back to the start position, and repeat the stretch stepping the opposite foot out in front to create the low-lunge. Perform as a single stretch for each side, or as two-to-three sets.

## Optional Progression



Couple this hip opener series with a kneeling hamstring stretch. From the rotation position above, bring the torso back to center and realign the hips and shoulders. Shift the hips back and straighten (but not lock) the front knee. The ankle should be flexed with the front toes raised off the ground. The back leg does not move, but continues to support your body weight through the stretch. Hold for 10-30 seconds, breathing with the slow count of four to inhale/exhale.

