

BREAKING THE SPRINT CURSE:

THE NEW HAMSTRING PLAYBOOK

Hamstring injuries remain one of the most common setbacks in sprint-based sports, often returning despite traditional prevention strategies.

New research is shifting the focus from simple stretching to a smarter approach that combines strength, neuromuscular control, and progressive load management.



4 REASONS WHY THE OLD “STRETCH MORE” ADVICE NO LONGER HOLDS:

1. HAMSTRING INJURY IS A TEAM SPORT.

Architecture, eccentric capacity, neuromuscular timing, and load spikes all combine to create risk.

2. STRENGTH ALONE ISN'T THE WHOLE ANSWER.

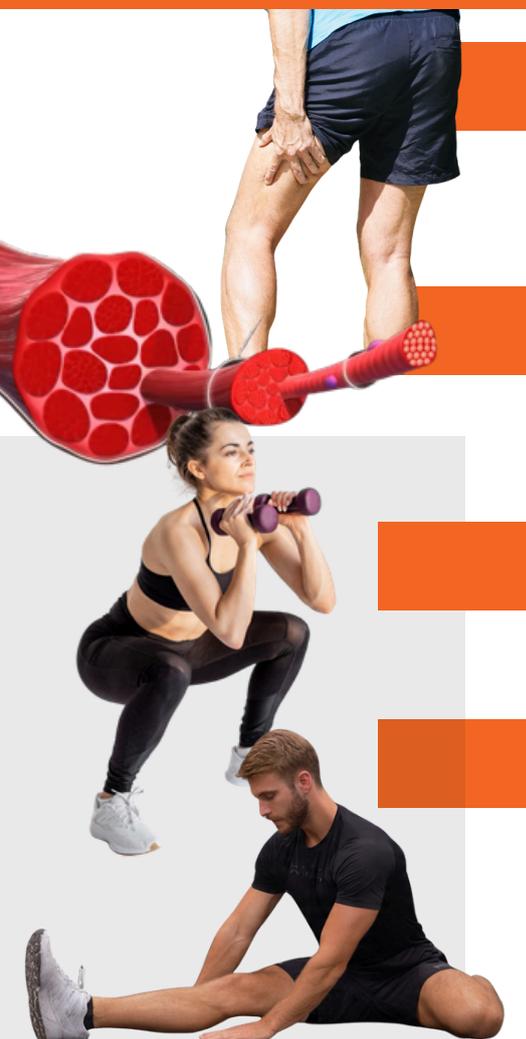
Short fascicle length and poor eccentric control predict problems even when maximal strength looks fine.

3. PREVENTION CAN BE PERFORMANCE-FRIENDLY

Properly dosed eccentric work protects without blunting sprint or jump outputs.

4. SMALL, CONSISTENT DOSES BEAT OCCASIONAL HEROICS.

Short, progressive programmes with good compliance deliver the biggest injury reductions.



3 EVIDENCE- BASED PREVENTION MOVES



MAKE NORDIC HAMSTRING EXERCISE NON- NEGOTIABLE.

- Progressive NHE builds eccentric resilience in the muscle-tendon unit and is the backbone of most successful prevention programmes.



ADD HIGH- VELOCITY ECCENTRIC DRILLS.

- Exercises that load the hamstrings at speeds closer to sprinting teach the muscle to tolerate rapid lengthening.



MONITOR AND SMOOTH TRAINING LOAD.

- Avoid sudden spikes; use progressive overload and objective markers (RPE, session duration, movement quality) to keep athletes in the adaptation zone.

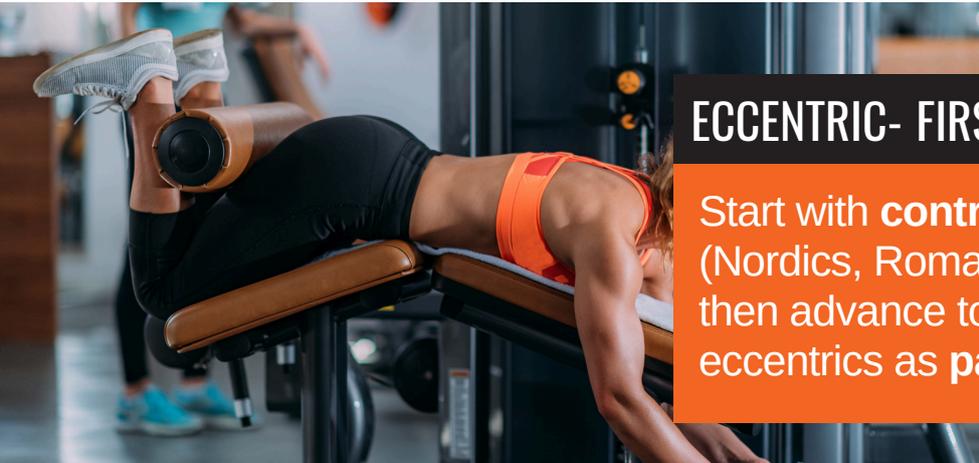


HERE'S A QUICK 4-WEEK STARTER (PLUG- AND- PLAY):

- Week 1:** 2x/week NHE low volume;
- Week 2:** increase reps;
- Week 3:** add Romanian deadlift eccentrics;
- Week 4:** introduce short sprint-specific eccentrics and power maintenance.



2 REHAB APPROACHES THAT MATCH THE EVIDENCE



ECENTRIC- FIRST PROGRESSION.

Start with **controlled eccentrics** (Nordics, Romanian deadlift variations), then advance to **faster, sprint-specific eccentrics** as **pain and control permit**.

PRESERVE PERFORMANCE WHILE REHABBING.

Maintain **sprint mechanics, power drills, and neuromuscular timing** so athletes return **stronger and functionally ready**, not just **symptom-free**.



1 CLEAR TAKEAWAY:

DO THE NORDICS. DO THEM RIGHT.

Prioritise short, progressive eccentric programmes embedded into sport-specific training; this is the most practical, evidence-aligned path to cut hamstring injuries while preserving performance.



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