

## HORSE RIDER WORKOUTS

**We are all guilty of spending all our time thinking about our horse's health, stamina, suppleness and strength. Yet as riders, we often forget to pay attention to our own fitness.**

**Using specific flexibility and strength training that targets your core stability will not only help with posture but also improve your confidence in the saddle. This will of course be of huge benefit to the horse and rider combination.**

**A lack of flexibility is common, especially for riders who may spend a lot of time at a desk, or for those of us who are now over 30 years of age because we tend to lose mobility over time. Some of the most common areas of tension in riders are the hamstrings, the hips and the groin. But as we make adjustments to optimise our posture, we build the muscle memory and strength necessary to sustain correct posture with less effort over time. By targeting these areas with training, you can improve symmetry in the body, help prevent muscle tearing and support the joints.**

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## 1: KNEELING HIP & QUAD STRETCH



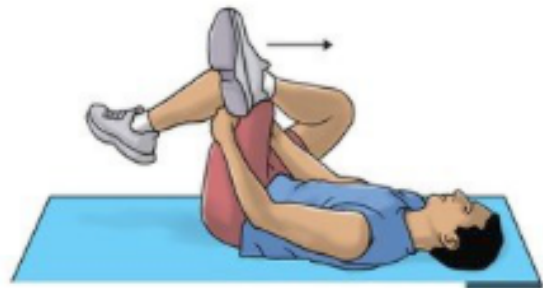
Kneel with your left knee on the floor and your right leg at a 90-degree angle in front of you. Put your hands on your hips and keep your back straight.

Keeping your left knee pressed to the floor, lean forward into your right hip while squeezing the muscles in your left buttocks.

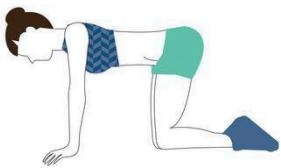
Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat on the other side.

## 2: PIRIFORMIS & GLUTE STRETCH

Lie on your back and slightly bend one leg. Raise your other foot up onto your bent leg and rest it on your thigh. Then reach forward, holding onto your knee and pull towards you. As above, hold this stretch for 30 seconds and repeat at least 2 to 3 times on each side.



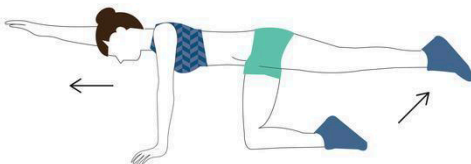
## 3: BIRD DOG



Start with your hands under your shoulders and knees under your hips, while keeping your head, neck, and back straight.

Raise your right arm and reach it forward until it's in line with your torso. As you bring your arm forward, kick your left leg backwards until it's

straight and in line with your torso, hold for 10 seconds. Slowly bring your arm and leg back to the ground and repeat with the opposite arm and leg. 5 reps.



#### **4: BUTTERFLY STRETCHES**

Start in a seated position and bring the soles of your feet together and sit tall through your sit bones. Progress this stretch by placing pressure on your knees with your hands. The closer your feet are to your body the more you will stretch your groin muscles.

If this is comfortable push your knees towards the floor and lean forward from your upper body. Hold for 30seconds.



#### **5: BICYCLE CRUNCHES**

Lie face up and place your hands behind your head, supporting your neck with your fingers.

Have your abs tucked in and the small of your back pushed hard against the floor.

Lift your knees in toward your chest while lifting your shoulder blades off the floor.

Rotate to the right, bringing the left elbow towards the right knee as you extend the other leg into the air.

Switch sides, bringing the right elbow towards the left knee.

Alternate each side in a pedalling motion.

30secs x 3 reps.

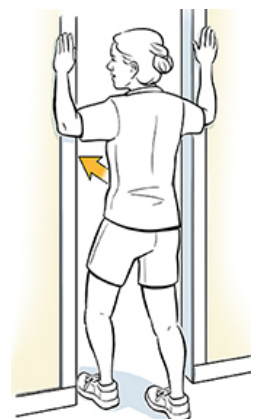


#### **6: DOORWAY STRETCH**

Stand in an open doorway and spreading your arms out to the side.

Grip the sides of the doorway with each hand at or below shoulder height, and lean forward through the doorway until you feel a light stretch.

Keep a straight back as you lean and shift your weight onto your toes. You should feel a stretch in the front of your shoulder. Do not overstretch.

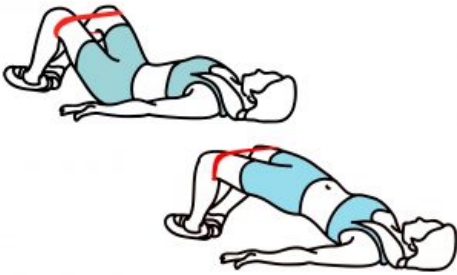


## USING A RESISTANCE BAND

Resistance bands are made of strong rubber. You may be quite surprised as to how much harder they can make your workouts. A great way at highlighting asymmetry. You can buy resistance bands in a variety of thicknesses depending on your level.

### 1: BRIDGE

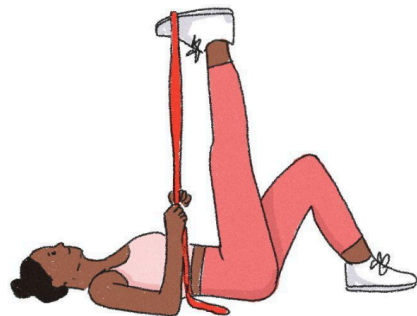
Place the band just above your knees, lie in your back with knees bent and legs hip width apart, with your feet on the floor. Your pelvis should be in neutral position. This means the your pelvis is level and your tail bone is neither tucked under or sticking out. **(Place your hands flat under your lower back and squash them the check you can create neutral spine)**



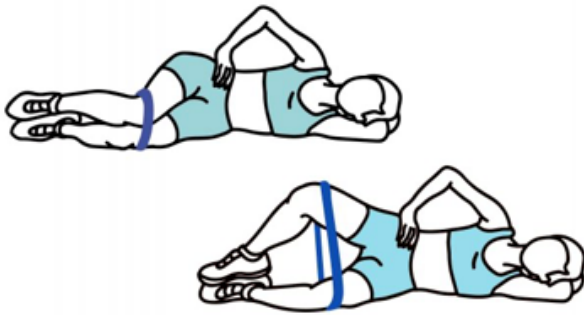
As you breathe, press into your feet and start to peel your spine up. You should feel the front of your hips opening up. Make sure those glute, hamstrings are activated. Slowly lower so your body is back resting on the mat in neutral position. Repeat 10 times.

### 2: HAMSTRING STRETCH

Lie on your back bend your left leg and keep your foot flat on the floor. Extend your right leg up until it is perpendicular with the floor. Loop the middle of a resistance band around the arch of your right foot. Grasp the ends of the band in both hands, and while keeping your right leg as straight as possible, pull on the band to draw your leg closer in toward your upper body. Stop when you feel the stretch in the back of your right leg. Maintain this position and extend your left leg until it is flat on the mat. Hold for 10 seconds, relax and repeat five times. Rest and repeat with your left leg.



### 3: CLAMSHELL

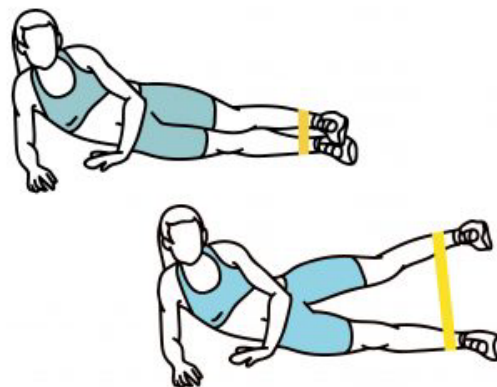


Place the band just above your knees and lie on your side, one hand on your hip and one supporting your head. Knees are together and bent at 45 degrees. Keeping your feet together, spread your knees

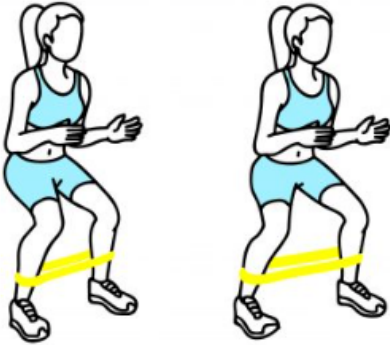
apart as far as possible, hold briefly, and return to start.

### 4: LYING HIP ABDUCTION

Place the band just above your knees and lie on your side, one hand on your hip and one supporting your head. Knees are together and bent at 45 degrees. Keeping your feet together, spread your knees apart as far as possible, hold briefly, and return to start.



## **5: SIDE STEPS**



*Keep constant tension on the band during the whole exercise. The moment you lose tension, you lose that extra gluteal activation you're trying to get.*

While standing with your knees slightly bent, wrap a resistance band just above both ankles, place your hands on your hips, and take a hip width stance so there's tension on the resistance band.

Keeping your chest upright, back straight, and knees slightly bent, take a big step with one foot away from the opposite foot. You should feel some nice tension on the outer hip and glutes. Then take a similar sized step with the opposite foot towards your other foot, keeping a hip width stance and tension on the resistance band.

**This exercise is especially useful as a warmup to activate the muscles around the hips and glutes before riding.**

**Do these exercises 3 times per week. Make sure to breathe and focus on tightening your core, not your neck. Stop the exercises if you feel any pain, especially in your lower back.**

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