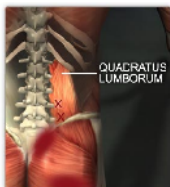


Quadratus Lumborum Stretch by Brad L. Surette, BA, RMT

The quadratus lumborum or QL is an important low back muscle.

As you can see in the photo shown below, one attachment of the right quadratus lumborum originates on the last rib and forms a rectangular shape so that the other attachment inserts on the top of your iliac crest. The same holds true for the left side of the body.



The QL also attaches the pelvis to the spine. Therefore, the QL is often a muscle affected when low back pain is present.

In the case of habitual seated computer use, long car drives or extended flights, the constant contraction of the QLs can lead to muscle fatigue.

The same can be said for the use of a lower back support in a chair.

Whenever a tissue becomes fatigued, stressed, or damaged unfortunately this means there is an opportunity for a trigger point to form.

Trigger points are hyperirritable

spots of skeletal muscle tissue that are associated with palpable nodules in taut bands of muscle fibers.

Waste product and toxins can become trapped inside the taut band of muscle and the expected fresh supply of nutrient-rich blood is blocked or interrupted. To get our attention that something is wrong, the body sends out a pain signal.

Each "x" in the previous photo is an indication of the usual trigger point locations.

A Registered Massage Therapist trained in trigger point removal can provide you with much relief. In between treatments you can perform QL stretches as a form of preventative maintenance.

To begin, find a wall clear of any pictures or other objects that may interfere with your stretch.

Place the heels of your feet up against the wall. Do the same for your buttocks, your shoulders and the back of your head.

Everyone is built differently so this may not be possible. The idea is to make as much contact with the wall as you can in order to keep your spine in alignment.

Next, allow your arms to hang freely resting your open palms on the sides of your thighs.

Slowly lower your left hand down the outside of your left thigh. As your left palm slides down your left thigh your right palm should slide up your right thigh. Please be sure to keep as much of your body pressed against the wall as is possible.

When the tips of your left fingers reach the left knee, you should feel a gentle stretch in your lower back. Hold this stretch for a full thirty seconds.

When your count is complete, slowly begin sliding your left palm back up your left thigh to the starting position. Your right palm simultaneously slides back down your right thigh.

Pause. Take a nice deep breathe, exhale, and perform the same stretch for the right side.

For a more intensive stretch, see the photo below.



Repeat at least three times daily for optimum results. - Brad L. Surette, BA, RMT