

Basic Somatic Transformation for Freeing Hamstrings

(from Thomas Hanna)

THE ESSENCE OF THIS MOVEMENT: balanced counter-tension between your working leg and your arms and smooth movement



STARTING POSITION: sitting on the floor with one leg bent and dropped to the side.

Draw the knee of your straight leg up enough to permit you to grasp your foot from the sides with both hands; your finger tips meet at your sole, at the ball of your foot. Get a firm grip, and you are ready to begin. Work patiently *within your comfort zone*.



1. Holding your foot firmly, *gently* push with your leg, so that your arm and shoulder stretch long. Hang your head forward. Work gently to the edge of your flexibility.

⇒ *TRY THIS!* ⇒ Bend your other knee as you push.

⇒ *TRY THIS!* ⇒ Point the toes of the “pushing” leg.



2. Now, gradually relax your push, let your knee bend, and take up the slack by drawing your leg up with your hands. Tip your head ‘way back.

It's a kind of moving isometric exercise.

⇒ *TRY THIS!* ⇒ Lock the other knee straight.

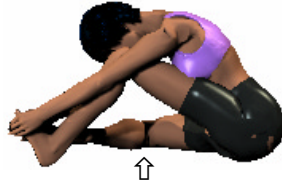
⇒ *TRY THIS!* ⇒ Lift the toes of the other leg to help lock the knee.



3. Now, push and straighten the leg you're holding, resisting by pulling backward with your hands. Resistance makes you feel more clearly.

You'll notice that with each repetition, you get a little further. You're gaining feeling and control of the muscular tension in your hamstrings. Remember to move slowly enough and just strongly enough to feel the muscle-action clearly.

⇒ *TRY THIS!* ⇒ Bow your head forward as you straighten your leg.



⇒ *TRY THIS!* ⇒ Bend the other knee.

After about ten *slow motion* repetitions, stand up and feel the difference between your two legs. Walk. Notice the difference in how your legs feel.

Now, do your other leg.

VARIATIONS: (Each position increases awareness and control.)

- on your back
- on your sides

Balancing Your Feet to Free Your Hamstrings Further

This movement is the same as the preceding one, except for the hand position on your foot.

THE ESSENCE OF THIS MOVEMENT: keeping your ankle relaxed as you move your leg



STARTING POSITION: sitting on the floor with one leg bent and dropped to the side.

Draw your straight leg up enough to permit you to grasp the sole of your foot with both hands; your fingertips meet at your heel at the pivot point of foot movement. To find the pivot point, pull upward into your heel with your fingers, then flex and extend your foot; position your fingertips so their pressure neither causes your ankle to flex nor prevents it from flexing.

With your hands in this position, do the preceding somatic transformation for freeing the hamstrings.

VARIATIONS: (Each position increases awareness and control.)

- sitting
- on your back
- on your sides