



Proprioceptive Exercise 2: Standing Hip Raises

Proprioceptive Exercise 2 is the second proprioceptive exercise taught to every student. While Proprioceptive Exercise 1 works with the front to back tilting of the pelvis, Proprioceptive Exercise 2 works with the lateral (side to side) tilting of the pelvis. The exercise involves standing in front of a full length mirror, lifting each hip up and slowly lowering down, and going back and forth until the hips feel even. Proprioceptive Exercise 2 allows students to release and regain control of the muscles that laterally tilt the pelvis and laterally flex the spine, and relieve related conditions such as functional uneven leg length and scoliosis.

EXERCISE DESCRIPTION

Starting Position: For this exercise, you should wear tight-fitting clothes so that you can see your alignment. Stand in front of a full-length mirror, a few feet away from the mirror. Your feet should be pointing straight ahead, with about the width of your fist in between your feet. Relax and let your arms hang by your sides. Close your eyes.

Movement: Slowly and gently lift your right hip up, letting your right heel lift off the floor while the ball of your right foot stays on the floor. Feel the contraction of the muscles on the right side of your waist. Then slowly and gently release your hip down to a neutral position. Then slowly and gently lift your left hip up, letting your left heel lift off the floor while the ball of your left foot stays on the floor. Feel the contraction of the muscles on the left side of your waist. Then slowly and gently release your hip down. Continue to go back and forth from side to side. Gradually make these movements smaller each time. After a few minutes, you'll get to a point where you feel like your hips are even. Open your eyes and see if what you see in the mirror matches up with what you feel in your body. If not, try to make minor adjustments by releasing muscles that you are holding tight so that you can stand with your hips evenly aligned. Take the time to notice how this feels internally so that you can incorporate this posture into your daily life.

ANATOMY OF PROPRIOCEPTIVE EXERCISE 2

This exercise involves laterally tilting the pelvis (hiking the hips up one at a time) and laterally flexing the spine. The muscles involved in these actions are:

- Erector spinae group
- Iliopsoas
- Internal and external obliques
- Intertransversarii
- Latissimus dorsi
- Quadratus lumborum

CONDITIONS HELPED BY PROPRIOCEPTIVE EXERCISE 2

Proprioceptive Exercise 2 directly addresses the following conditions by releasing involuntary muscle contraction in the muscles that laterally tilt the pelvis and laterally flex the spine:

- Muscle tightness in the lower back and waist
- Lower back pain
- Disc problems in the lumbar spine
- Sciatica
- Scoliosis
- Hip tightness and pain
- Functional uneven leg length
- Knee and ankle pain
- Seated and standing posture

HOW TO TEACH PROPRIOCEPTIVE EXERCISE 2

Get the student in their starting position. Your student should be wearing tight-fitting clothes so that they and you can see their alignment. They should not be wearing shoes. Have your student stand in front of a full-length mirror, a few feet away from the mirror. Their feet should be pointing straight ahead, with about the width of their fist in between their feet. The student should relax and let their arms hang by their sides.

Instruct the student to close their eyes. It is important that students keep their eyes closed during proprioceptive exercises so that they focus on their internal sense of their posture and not on what they look like in the mirror.

Teach the exercise. Instruct the student to slowly lift their right hip up, letting their right heel lift off the floor while the ball of their right foot stays on the floor. Ask your student to notice what muscles they feel contracting as they lift their hip up. When they are ready, they can lower their hip down as slowly and as consciously as they possibly can. When they have lowered their hip down all the way to a neutral position, they can do the same thing with the left hip. Ask your student to notice how this movement might feel different on their left side than it did on their right. They can continue to go back and forth from side to side, always releasing completely to neutral each time, and taking a moment to sense what neutral feels like. They should gradually make the hip raises smaller each time. They should take their time and not feel rushed. Eventually they will get to a point where they feel like their hips are evenly aligned. When they get to this point, they can open their eyes and look in the mirror. Ask the student to notice if what they feel in their body matches up with what they see in the mirror. They can take the time to make further adjustments to their posture if they wish, noticing how these adjustments feel internally. It can be helpful for the student to slowly walk around the room or up and down the hall after doing this exercise so that they can integrate the changes that they have felt.

Common mistake:

The most common mistake in Proprioceptive Exercise 2 is not finding neutral after each hip raise. Make sure the student isn't rushing from one side to the other. After lowering down each hip, the student should take a moment to completely relax and notice what their neutral position feels like.

The following is an example of how I teach Proprioceptive Exercise 2:

For this exercise, you should wear tight fitting clothes so that you can really see your alignment. To do this exercise, stand in front of a full length mirror, a few feet away from the mirror. Face the mirror and let your arms hang by your sides. Your feet can be a comfortable hip width distance apart, with about the width of your fist in between your feet. Your feet should not be wider than your hips. Make sure your feet are pointing straight ahead, not turned in or turned out.

Close your eyes. Slowly lift your right hip up toward your right armpit. Your right heel will lift off the floor, while the ball of your foot will stay on the floor. Feel the gentle contraction of your waist muscles on your right side. Then, release as slowly and with as much control as you can to let your hip come back down. Resist gravity as you lower your hip down.

When you've lowered your right hip all the way back down to where it started, slowly lift your left hip up toward your left armpit. Your left heel will lift off the floor, while your toes will stay on the floor. Feel the gentle contraction of your waist muscles on your left side. Then, release as slowly and with as much control as you can to let your hip come back down.

Now you can start going back and forth from side to side. Take your time and move as slowly as you can – there's no rush. Each time you lift up your hip, you can lift up a little less, so you're letting the movement get a little smaller each time. Eventually, you'll get to a place where you feel like your hips are even and you're standing straight.

When you're ready, open your eyes and look in the mirror. Does what you see in the mirror match up with what you feel? Are your hips even, or is one hip higher than the other?

If it looks like your hips are fairly even, take a moment to really notice how you feel internally. Does this feel like how you typically stand? Or does one hip feel higher or lower than the other, even though they look even? Do you feel off-balance? Adjusting to a new posture takes time. Your internal sense of proprioception needs time to adjust. So, give yourself that time, and let yourself adjust gradually. You may feel changes in other parts of your body as you go through this process. Now, take a few minutes to slowly walk around and see how this posture feels as you move.