

## Fitness Forum: Prone stretch adds range to hip flexor

by CNS

**THE MOVES:** Stretching the hip flexor using a bench and a press-up motion.

**HIP FLEX** - To stretch the hip flexor, firefighter Jeff Akens lies face down on a bench with one leg to the side of the bench. The stretch is achieved by pressing the chest up and keeping the pelvis flat on the bench. CNS Photo by Michael Franklin. **WORKS ON:** Stretches the hip flexor and opens the chest.

**PRECAUTIONS:** Do not perform this stretch if it causes low back pain. Do not perform this exercise if you have been diagnosed with an "unstable" low back, until you are cleared by a physician.

**SETUP:** Lie face down on a bench so that the torso and right thigh are supported, but the left leg is off to the side. The right knee should just be off the end of the bench.

**STEPS:** The goal is to keep the pelvis flat to the bench as much as possible. Bend the left knee and place the left foot on the ground as best you can. Place the hands on the bench at mid-chest level and perform a press-up until you feel a stretch in the right upper thigh. Try to distribute the backward arch of the spine along its entire length rather than it being concentrated in the low back. Pause, and return slowly. Repeat.

**REPETITIONS:** Three to five repetitions held for 30-60 seconds each leg.

**OPTIONS:** For an aggressive quadriceps stretch, bend the right knee while you are holding the press-up position.

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