

Before you begin

You need to understand the key scientific methodology behind the StretchFit approach. It called “contract/relax” stretching and sounds complicated, but in practice its simple.

Here’s how it works:

- 1** Take yourself VERY SLOWLY into a mild stretch. We call this the POINT OF TENSION, or POT. Moving quickly will trigger the stretch reflex. On a scale of one to ten, one being not much of a stretch and ten being complete agony, we suggest a score of five or six. Hold the position for **five breaths** and settle.
- 2** Contract the muscles that you are trying to stretch. We will give you cues, of course; although it may seem counterintuitive, contract the muscles we recommend for **five seconds**. Use around 30 % of your maximum effort, and start gently.
- 3** Relax totally and restretch to the new position. Don’t expect miracles, but you can expect to be able to go further into the stretch, often between 1 to 10 centimetres further. Hold the new POT for **fifteen breaths**.

Contract/relax in the roller stretch



- 1** Press the foam roller away to the POT. Hold for 5 breaths.



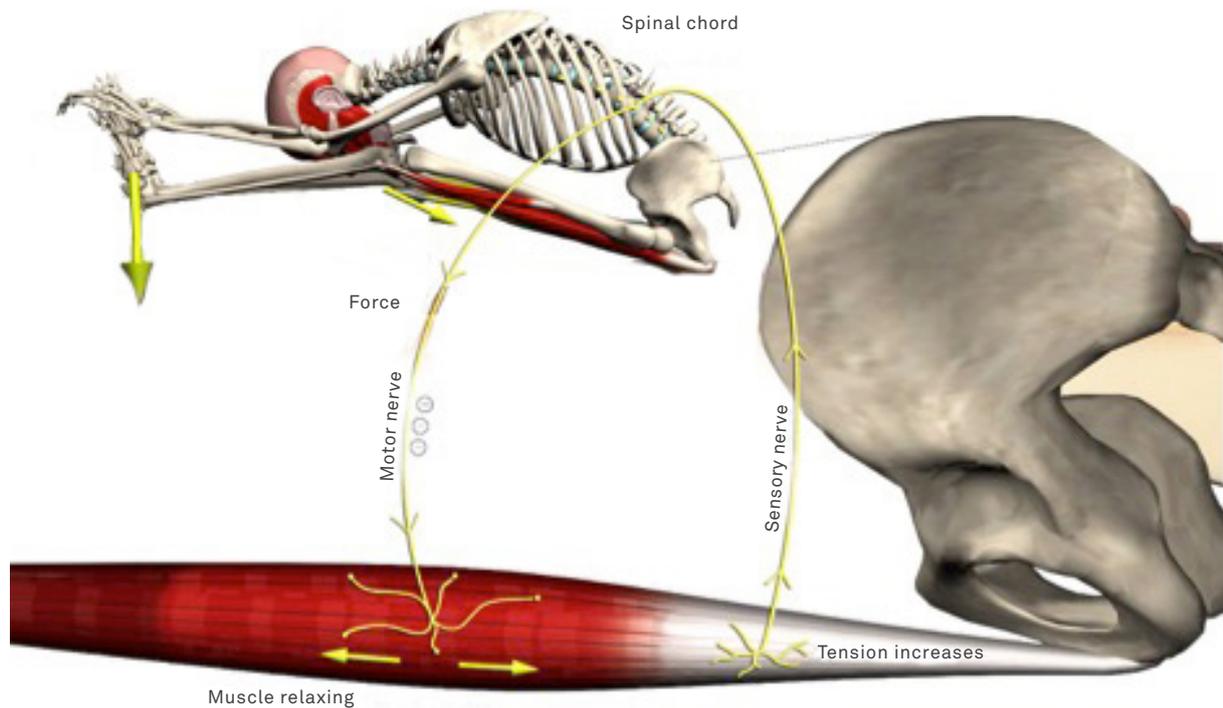
2

Contract the muscles you are stretching. In this case, it is the hamstrings. Contract for 5 seconds by pressing your feet down into the foam roller. Use 30% of maximum force. The GTO will signal increased tension via a sensory nerve to the spinal cord. A relaxation signal will travel to the muscle, facilitating a restretch.



3

Relax and re-stretch to the new POT. Hold for 15 deep breaths. See image above.



4

Contract/Relax technique in practice. The muscles-hamstrings in the image above- are gently stretched and held in position. They are then contracted isometrically i.e without producing movement. A sensory nerve from the tendon (in white) signals to the spinal chord a change in muscle tension without movement. A reflexive signal is sent back to the muscle via a motor nerve to relax. The stretch length can then be increased.