

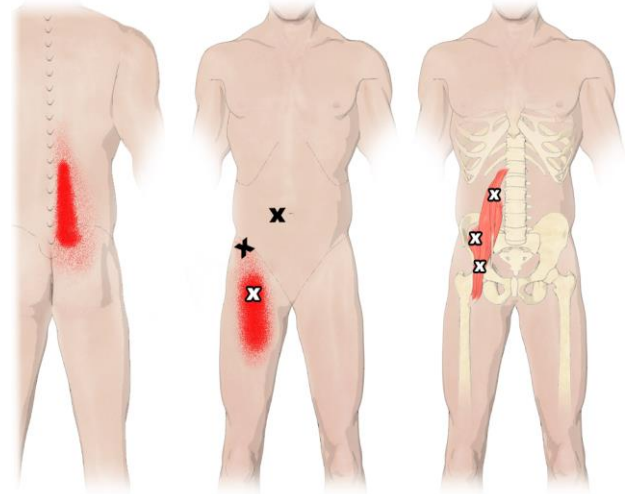
# wholehouse

## The Psoas Muscle

The Psoas Muscle is known as the “fight-flight” muscle. The Psoas connects our lumbar spine to our inner thighs by running through our hip joint. The connection between our back and our legs enables us to run and kick. These are the two primary functions that we need in “fight-flight” mode.

When our nervous system senses that we are in danger it alerts our Psoas to fire up. This enables us to be ready to run away from a lion that is chasing us, or to fight off another predator that may be more of our match. The neural connection between our brain and our muscles is a two-way street. Just as the brain tells the Psoas to fire up; when the Psoas is in flexion it is sending neural messages to the brain saying “we are in danger and are going to need some support!” When the brain gets this message from our tense muscles, we fire out cortisol and adrenaline needed to preserve our life. Our Psoas muscle acts as a litmus test for the rest of the body.

When our Psoas is in a state of relaxation and rest- typically so is the rest of our body. And when our Psoas is tight and flexed- so is the rest of our body, and if chronically tight, it can mean that our overall health and wellbeing is impaired.



- The issue when we are dealing with chronic stress or trauma is that our Psoas is often in a constant state of flexion/activation.
- Trauma research shows us that our physiology is impacted just as much as (if not more than) our psychology through stress and adverse experiences.
- When we have experienced chronic stress or trauma our nervous system is hyper-vigilant. Our brain and our muscles are in a constant state of ready, or even activation, in order to help us survive. Our nervous system does not have a rational way of thinking. It does not know how to differentiate the stress of traffic, cityscapes, or uncomfortable e-mails from a bear that is about to eat us. It only knows how to say “let’s get out of here!!” or “it’s ooooookay to chill out...” Both of which occurs at an unconscious level in a fraction of a second.
- Our Psoas muscle is related to our Diaphragm, one of our main muscles responsible for breathing. The Diaphragm and the Psoas connect along the same vertebrae in the lower spine- so when the Psoas is tight we are unable to fully extend our Diaphragm, restricting our ability to take a full breath. When we are taking short, shallow breaths as opposed to long, slow breaths our body is in a constant state of Sympathetic Arousal (fight-flight). We cannot have both our Sympathetic and Parasympathetic (rest-digest) systems firing at the same time, and when our Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS) is offline than we are unable to properly digest and absorb our food nutrients, our immune system is not going to be functioning at an optimal level.
  - Do you sit more hours in a day then you spend moving around?
  - Have you ever experienced stressful events in life, be them extreme events or seemingly less significant?
  - Do you often have lower back pain?
  - Do you often find yourself feeling anxious, agitated, or frustrated?