

P. is a male in his mid 20s. He is an electrician who works for a hospital chain. He is active, goes to the gym regularly and likes to skateboard. He reached out to me for a Skype session after practicing some of my yoga videos online.

PROBLEM

P. complained of recurring pain in his lower back (right side) and outer right hip. He said that doing yoga online helped him become more aware of the body, strengthen his core and overall was helpful for relieving tension, but the discomfort kept coming back.

INVESTIGATION

In the course of our conversation it became clear that P. did not have any particular injuries or incidents that would explain his discomfort. He was young, healthy and active. He explained that he had more pain at the end of the day, and sometimes it bothered him at night. He couldn't pinpoint any particular activity or movement that triggered his discomfort. I asked him to describe his usual day to me. He explained that as an electrician he spent most of his day standing on a ladder looking up and working on the lights in the ceiling. He used an industrial ladder with a platform on top, so he was steady and symmetrical in his body positioning while he worked. Despite holding his arms up and head raised for most of the day, his neck and shoulders never bothered him. Then he said: "That's my day – get up the ladder, work on the ceiling light, get off the ladder, move the ladder, get up the ladder..." I asked him to show me how he moved the ladder.

STAND-OUT FACTOR

P. demonstrated how he picked up the ladder by lunging forward with his right leg, leaning on it, twisting his entire upper body to the right and lifting the ladder from the outside of his right leg. At one point his right leg was supporting most of his body weight, the weight of the ladder and propelling all that weight upwards. His right knee leaned inward in the process. I asked him to pretend to do the same thing on the other side of the body, as if the ladder was to his left. He was not able to do that. His left leg wouldn't support the weight, his torso couldn't rotate that far to the left, and the whole movement felt very awkward and unstable.

HYPOTHESIS




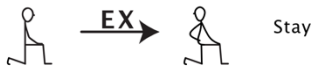

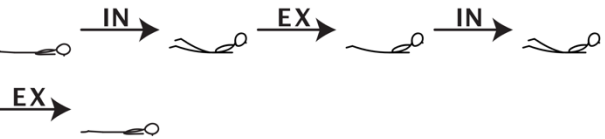




P. was amazed at how asymmetrical his body felt on this one movement that he's been doing many times every day. It was clear that he was overusing his right leg to support the weight of his body and the ladder, while at the same time repetitively twisting his torso while holding the ladder. I told him my favorite quote that in the body it's usually the victims who cry out, not the criminals. His right hip and his lower back on the right side were the victims of this repetitive action, while the other side wasn't doing enough to support it. I asked him to show me his gym routine. It became clear that his movement patterns from work followed him to the gym and were exacerbated by his gym routine.

COURSE OF ACTION

We focused on creating a short yoga practice that he could do after work before his workout at the gym. My goal was to mimic the movements that he did at work with better form and more body awareness, to strengthen the muscles on the other side of his body, to release chronic tension in his lower back and right abductors, and to develop more symmetry between the two sides. We were looking to "neutralize" the asymmetrical load on his body at the end of his work day, so that his gym workout would be more effective in strengthening his body. He also committed to lifting the ladder from the other side throughout the day. We tried the following practice together during our session and P. felt immediate relief. He committed to doing this practice on his own at least 4x week.



Short yoga practice for P.

<p>1</p> 	<p>VAJRASANA. To gently strengthen and stretch the lower back. Repeat 4x.</p>	<p>Begin standing on your knees. IN: Sweep your arms up. EX: Gradually contract your abdomen as you bring your chest down to your thighs and butt toward the heels, placing your hands on the lower back. IN: Lead with the chest as you go up to stand on your knees, sweeping the arms up.</p>
<p>2</p> 	<p>EKAPADA USTRASANA. To stretch the quads and hip flexors, to strengthen abductors. Repeat 3x, then stay for 4-6breaths. Do #3 and #4, then switch sides.</p>	<p>Begin on your knees with your right foot on the floor in front of you. IN: Bend the right knee while raising your left arm up (make sure that the knee doesn't go past the toes). EX: Return back to the starting position. Repeat a few times and then stay in the pose for several breaths. Place your right hand on the outside of your right knee. EX: Press your knee and your hand into each other while huggingthe waist in. Maintain this engagement as you inhale.</p>
<p>3</p> 	<p>KNEELING PARSVOTTANASANA. To stretch the hamstrings. Repeat 3x, then stay for 4-6breaths. Be sure not to hike the hip up.</p>	<p>Begin on your knees with your right leg extended in front of you, heel on the floor. EX: Bend forward toward the extended leg. IN: Lift back up. Repeat a few times, then bend down and stay there for several breaths.</p>
<p>4</p> 	<p>KNEELING TWIST. To rotate the spine and stretch abductors. Turn and hold the pose for 4-6 breaths.</p>	<p>Begin on your knees with your right foot on the floor in front of you. EX: Turn to your right, look back and fold your right hand behind your back. Breathe here, keep your knee aligned over your ankle.</p>
<p>5</p> 	<p>Rest.</p>	
<p>6</p> 	<p>VIMANASANA. To strengthen the lower back and abductors. Repeat 4x.</p>	<p>Begin on your stomach with feet together and forearms on the floor. IN: Lift the chest and both legs, bringing the legs wide apart. EX: Keep the chest raised and bring your feet together. IN: Move the legs apart. EX: Bring your chest and legs down, feet together.</p>
<p>7</p> 	<p>APANASANA. To loosen up the lower back and hips. 4 breaths.</p>	<p>Begin on your back with hands over your knees. EX: Gradually contract the abdomen and bring the knees toward the chest. IN: Move the knees away from the chest. You can do this movement in circles, too.</p>
<p>8</p> 	<p>OPTIONAL: DVIPADA PITHAM. To strengthen the glutes, hamstrings and hips. Repeat 4x, then switch sides.</p>	<p>Begin on your back, knees bent, left foot on the floor, right knee bent and turned out. Place your right ankle in front of your left knee. IN: Slowly roll the hips up keeping the pelvis leveled. Keep pulling your right knee out. EX: Slowly roll the hips down.</p>
<p>9</p> 	<p>OPTIONAL: GOMUKASANA. To stretch the rotators. Hold for 6 breaths on each side.</p>	<p>Begin on your back. Place one knee on top of the other and pull them in toward the chest. Pull the ankle of the top leg toward yourself as well. Stay here for several breaths, then switch sides.</p>
<p>10</p> 	<p>OPTIONAL: APANSANA. To loosen up the lower back and hips. 4 breaths.</p>	<p>Begin on your back with hands over your knees. EX: Gradually contract the abdomen and bring the knees toward the chest. IN: Move the knees away from the chest. Try to keep the movement consistent.</p>