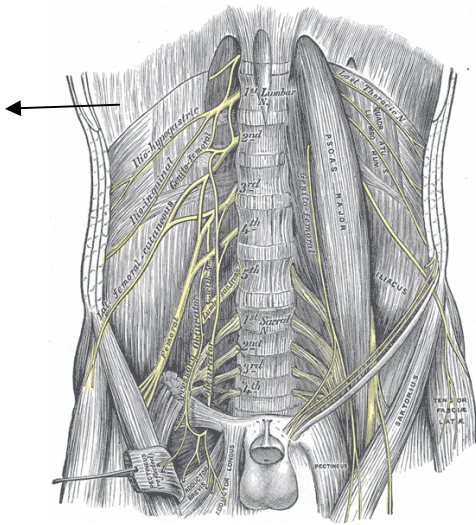


## **Bridging**

by Dawnna Wayburne, Iso Fit Director

Spring is the bridge between winter and summer and is a great time for putting your best foot forward and taking long walks on the beach. Walking is one of our most underestimated forms of getting from place to place and alignment is never at the top of our list of things to be aware of. However if you want to maintain good muscle tone and reduce wear and tear in the joints of the legs, pelvis and spine, taking better care of how you place your pelvis over your legs when you walk is a must! The psoas is a muscle that spans the pelvis and creates a “Bridge to the lower body”.



A strong psoas is a flexor AND a supporter; if the psoas and iliacus have been active in swinging the leg forward in the “gesture” phase of walking they will already be active and able to bear load transferring thrust upwards. (*Penny Hackney, Making Connections, 2002*)

Another great somatic writer, Mabel Todd taught, if not prepared for the load, “it cannot lift the weight so far or carry it so long”

The exercise below is one is simple yet perfect in creating a balanced bridge.

## **Bridging**

1. Sit with the hips against your arc and, with hands laced behind your head, roll back until your body is draped over the arc. Bridge to open the psoas/diaphragm area symmetrically (See pic)
2. Remain in this position using last 2” of the Hamstrings to send the weight forward over the feet
3. Shift your body sideways about 1.5”-2” and transfer your weight to the L leg. And then do the same thing to the R. Repeat this movement, lifting the opposite foot off the floor - you should feel your inner thighs, glutes and hamstrings working. Return to Centre. Hinge down.
4. Repeat 3-5 times.
5. Sit up and curl forwards in a Ball position, breathing into the back of the diaphragm to assist opening from behind. (Make sure to ask your instructor if you are unsure about any steps!)



NOTE: Your hamstrings originate on your “sitting bones” which, spatially, are on the same horizontal plane as the iliopsoas (your main hip flexor) on the lesser trochanter (the small knobby bit on the inside of your leg...right up by your groin). These two opposing muscle groups work in tandem at the joint level so that your femur/leg bone finds its correct placement in the joint through the vertical support and interaction of these two sets of muscles. Irmgard Bartenieff, one of my mentors would often say to her dancers that if “the pelvis doesn’t come fully over the leg the supportive line of upward thrust through the psoas will not come into play and without this connection the backside of the leg won’t be operative”. Basically, what I am trying to say is that a simple exercise like this can drastically improve posture and the way we walk as well as toning the thighs and glutes!