



## **MUSCLE SPASMS**

## **OVERVIEW**

A muscle spasm is when a muscle suddenly squeezes on its own. They are also known as a cramp or "charlie horse." Muscle spasms can cause sharp pain that lasts a few seconds or several minutes. If the spasm is strong enough, it can leave a lump on the muscle. Muscle spasms usually affect the thighs, calves, feet, arms, and hands.

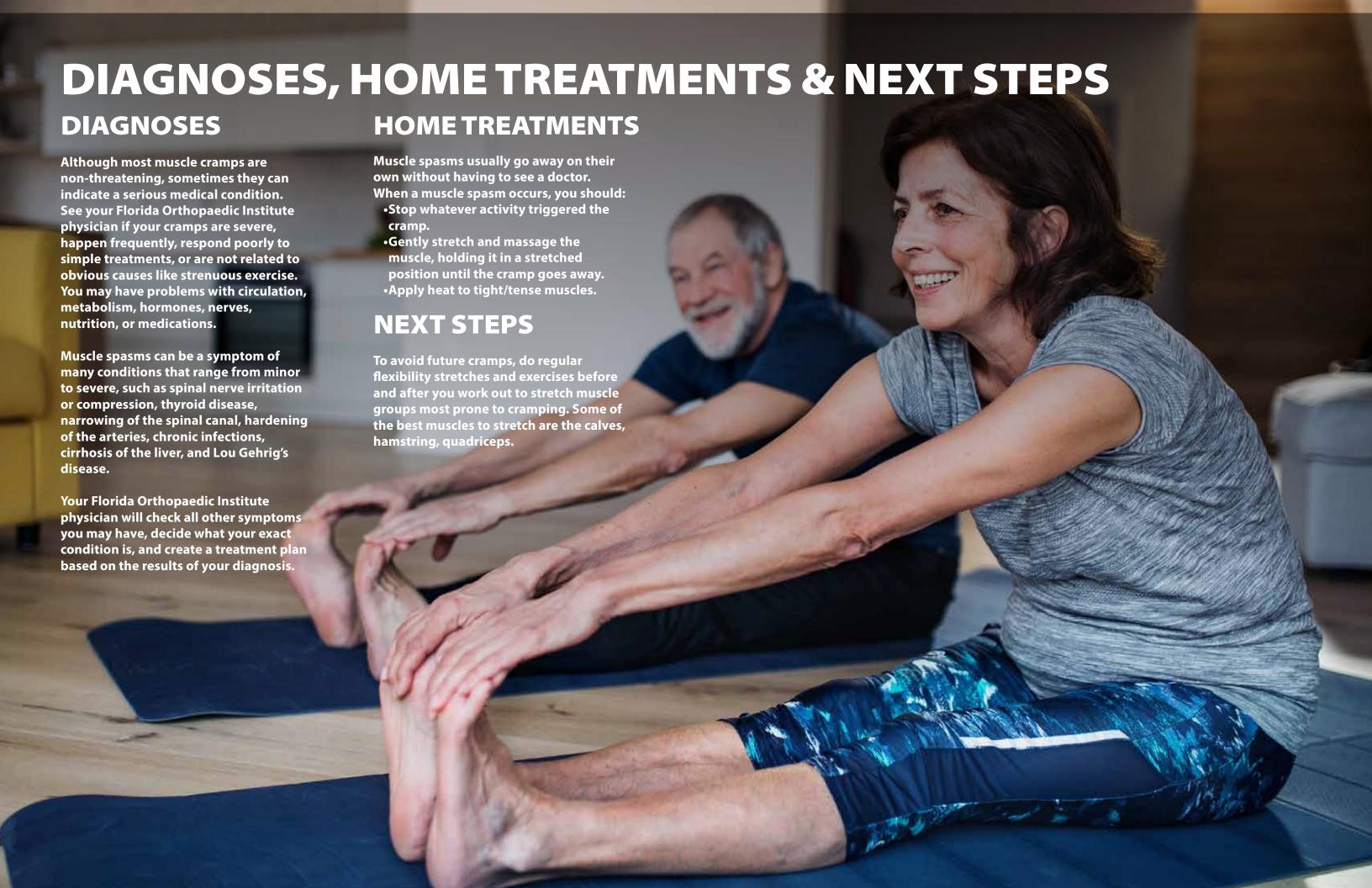
Muscle spasms are involuntary contractions of a muscle. They occur suddenly and do not relax for a few seconds to several minutes. Several factors or triggers may cause muscle spasms, such as strenuous exercise and dehydration. In most cases, muscle spasms can be treated with home remedies, but the muscle spasms may be a symptom of another condition that needs medical treatment. It is important to regularly stretch and condition your muscles to prevent muscle spasms altogether.

## **ANATOMY**

Muscles are bundles of fibers that contract and expand, which causes movement. When these muscles are regularly stretched and conditioned, their bundles of fibers lengthen, allowing them to contract and tighten more vigorously during exercise. When these muscles are poorly conditioned, they are more susceptible to fatigue, altering spinal neural reflex activity. When muscles are fatigued, their oxygen supply is depleted, leading to the buildup of waste products and spasms. When a cramp begins, the spinal cord stimulates the muscle to keep contracting.









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