

## Safe Hamstring Stretching:

\*\*\*The following stretches should either be avoided altogether or done VERY gently when sciatica is present, as any stretching of the hamstring can produce stretching of the sciatic nerve and can cause additional irritation on a sciatic nerve that is already inflamed.\*\*\*



*Figure 1. Begin by standing with the leg to be stretched in front of the other leg, with the knees of both legs somewhat bent. Rest your body weight on your arms with your hands on top of the knee to be stretched. Slowly shift your weight backwards as you straighten the front leg. You should feel a pull and possibly a burning sensation in the back of the front leg. Discontinue this exercise if it causes any significant pain, or try stretching more slowly. Hold position for about 10 seconds then switch and stretch the other leg. If you are unable to fully straighten the leg being stretched, repeat frequently until you can.*