



Sciatic Pain

How to experience relief and how to avoid pain

What is the Sciatic Nerve?

The Sciatic Nerve is the longest nerve in the body. It radiates down from the lower back (Lumbar 4 and 5) through the Sacrum, under the Piriformis muscle (buttock), down the back of the leg and into the toes is called Sciatica.

Symptoms of Sciatic Pain:

Sciatic Pain is a condition by which the sciatic nerve is impinged causing any of the following symptoms (radiculopathy) pain, tingling, limb weakness, burning and numbness.

Cause of Sciatic Pain:

Sciatica pain can be caused for various reasons. It can be due to Spinal Stenosis, herniated or bulging disc, tight Piriformis, Pregnancy, Trauma or Tumor.

Self Treatment of Sciatic Pain:

Before doing any self treatment 1st get checked to rule out any serious problems.

Where is your Pain?

The Sciatic nerve is the longest nerve in the body, so it is good to determine the location of the problem.

- **Buttocks/Above your knee** – This most probably means that your Piriformis Muscle is tight. This can happen if you have been walking or running too much and stretching too little or even standing too long. Sitting for long periods will not help either since your muscles become shortened and tight.
- **Below Knee** – does it radiate into the foot? Is the knee reflex slow and is it hard to lift your foot? Then the impingement is most probably at L3-L4.
- **Side of Foot** – Is your ankle reflex slow? Is it hard to lift your heel and walk on tip toe? Then the impingement may be at L5-S1.
- **Big Toe and Ankle** – Is there numbness and pain on the top of your foot all the way to your big toe? Then the impingement may be at L4-L5.2.

Self Care Solutions for your Pain:

Massage:

Ice massage – Massage the area that is affected for 15-20 mins with ice to reduce any inflammation that is putting pressure on the nerve. Do this throughout the day.

Piriformis and Buttocks Massage – if there is pain in the center of the buttocks then use a tennis ball to massage the area. Sit or lie with the ball under your buttocks and hips, and look for painful spots, and hold the ball on each spot for 10 seconds at a time for no more than 6-7



minutes at a time.

Stretching:

No stretching until the inflammation is gone. Then do Piriformis stretches. While lying on your back, bend both legs and place the ankle (of the same side as the painful buttock) above the bent knee of the opposite leg. Then with your hands reach behind the bent knee, clasp your hands behind the knee and pull the knee towards your chest. This will stretch the Piriformis.

At Work:

30 minute exercise break

Set an egg timer and get up from your desk every 30 minutes to stretch your legs, do NOT do any stretches or activities that require bending at the waist this will irritate the Sciatic nerve.

Ergonomic Chair

Invest in a good office chair, which has excellent low back support, arm rests and fits well under your desk. Choose a chair with wheels.

Rising from the chair

Rise from your chair by straightening your legs rather than bending at the waist.

Minimize reaching

Place your monitor at eye level, and keep your keyboard and mouse close. Move your chair to reach different parts of your desk rather than reaching for things, or stand up to do so.

Natural Anti-Inflammatory

I always believe in using the least harmful things first. There are a few nutritional and natural solutions for minimizing pain and inflammation, these are;

- Cherries – they have been proven to reduce muscle inflammation in athletes
- Bromelain - from the pineapple
- Turmeric and Arnica
- Exercise daily, maintain a good body weight and eat healthy foods

Why Does Massage Work and How to Choose a Massage Therapist

How and Why Massage Works:

Massage works by stretching muscle fibers, breaking up muscle adhesions, eliminating trigger points (painful areas of spasm) and stretching fascia.

Massage brings in fresh blood and flushes out painful metabolic waste from muscles (like lactic acid); bringing in a fresh supply of nutrients and oxygen to restore muscle health.

Relaxes Muscles - especially piriformis and gluts to stop nerve impingement

Calms irritated nerves and sends the message to the brain that there is a sensation of pleasure, rather than pain, this terminates the ischemic nerve pain cycle.

How to Choose a Massage Therapist:

When treating pain and medical conditions with massage Not every massage therapist is equal. When choosing a massage therapist to treat your pain and medical conditions you need to make sure that your therapist is



- Licensed
- Knowledgeable in human anatomy and physiology,
- That they have been trained in advanced therapeutic massage modalities such as, myofascial release, trigger point therapy, neuromuscular therapy, cranio-sacral therapy, to name a few.
- Listens to your needs and communicates with you

Is always appropriate, and never sexual