



Sciatica

What is Sciatica?

There Sciatica is a common type of pain affecting the sciatic nerve, a large nerve extending from the lower back down the back of each leg.

Common symptoms of sciatica include:

- Pain in the rear or leg that is worse when sitting
- Burning or tingling down the leg
- Weakness, numbness, or difficulty moving the leg or foot
- A constant pain on one side of the rear
- A shooting pain that makes it difficult to stand up
- Sciatica usually affects only one side of the lower body. Often, the pain extends from the lower back all the way through the back of the thigh and down through the leg. Depending on where the sciatic nerve is affected, the pain may also extend to the foot or toes.
- For some people, the pain from sciatica can be severe and debilitating. For others, the sciatica pain might be infrequent and irritating, but has the potential to get worse.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you have progressive lower extremity weakness, numbness in the upper thighs, and/or loss of bladder or bowel control.

Exercise Provides Sciatica Pain Relief

While it may seem counterintuitive, exercise is usually better for relieving sciatic pain than bed rest. Patients may rest for a day or two after their sciatic pain flares up, but after that time period, inactivity will usually make the pain worse.

Without exercise and movement, the back muscles and spinal structures become de-conditioned and less able to support the back. The de-conditioning and weakening can lead to back injury and strain, which causes additional pain. In addition, active exercise is also important for the health of the spinal discs. Movement helps exchange nutrients and fluids within the discs to keep them healthy and prevent pressure on the sciatic nerve.



6 most common causes of sciatica

There are 6 lower back problems that are the most common causes of sciatica:

- **Lumbar herniated disc**
- **Degenerative disc disease**
- **Isthmic spondylolisthesis**
- **Lumbar spinal stenosis**
- **Piriformis syndrome**
- **Sacroiliac joint dysfunction**

You can read in more detail about these here:

<http://www.spine-health.com/conditions/sciatica/sciatica-causes>

More common causes of sciatica

In addition to the most above causes, a number of other conditions can cause sciatica, including:

- **Pregnancy.** The changes that the body goes through during pregnancy, including weight gain, a shift on one's center of gravity, and hormonal changes, can cause sciatica during pregnancy.
- **Scar tissue.** If scar tissue compresses the nerve root, it can cause sciatica.
- **Muscle strain.** In some cases, inflammation related to a muscle strain can put pressure on a nerve root and cause sciatica.
- **Spinal tumor.** In rare cases, a spinal tumor can impinge on a nerve root in the lower back and cause sciatica symptoms.
- **Infection.** While rare, an infection that occurs in the low back can affect the nerve root and cause sciatica.
- Other things that may make your back pain worse include being overweight, not exercising regularly, wearing high heels, or sleeping on a mattress that is too soft.



Exercises for Sciatica

“Working out with sciatica requires a bit of caution, but having the painful condition should by no means keep a person completely sidelined from physical activity and exercise. In fact, the “use it or lose it” saying applies even to those who have this condition; while rest is an important aspect of healing from an intense flare up, being overly sedentary for an extended period of time can sap your lower back of it’s strength and mobility, which only causes further problems.”

<https://www.fitnessblender.com/blog/how-to-workout-with-sciatica-ideal-sciatica-workouts>

Core Work:

- Bicycle
- Plank
- Crunches with feet on the floor (to lengthen the spine)
- Scissor Kicks

Stretches:

- Knee to chest stretch
- Lying and Standing Hamstring stretch
- Cobra stretch
- Glute Stretch