

SCIATICA



Background

True sciatica is a neurological problem involving either the back or an entrapped nerve in the muscles of the buttock.

Sciatica is a referral of pain along the sciatic nerve which is a long nerve that branches out through your buttock and down the back of your leg. Typically, sciatica is only felt on one side of the body and can manifest from mild to severe symptoms.

Symptoms

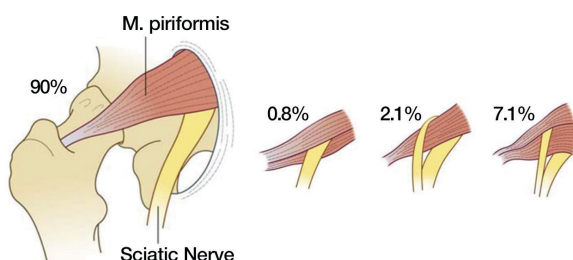
- Pain (intense pain in the buttock)
- Numbness
- Muscular weakness
- Gait dysfunction
- Sensory impairment
- Sensory disturbance
- Hot and cold or tinglings or burning sensations in the legs
- Reflex impairment

NOTE: If you experience bowel/bladder changes, saddle paraesthesia (numbness on the insides of your thighs) or changes in sexual function you should consult your doctor ASAP

Causes

Sciatica can be the result of either a central (structural) or peripheral cause. Structural causes relate to the relevant anatomy of the spine. Peripheral causes involve symptoms from areas away from the hard structure of the spine. Physiotherapists are expertly trained to help determine the true cause of your sciatica and treat this appropriately.

There could be many underlying causes for explaining the pain in your back and down your leg, your physiotherapist will be able to help identify the true source of your pain and treat it appropriately.



Risk Factors

- Age
- Occupation
- Diabetes
- Poor body biomechanics – we can improve this!
- Obesity
- Prolonged Sitting

Treatment

Your physiotherapist will assess your pain through a detailed history and objective examination to identify the root cause of your condition.

Physiotherapy treatment for sciatica involves manual therapy including massage and joint mobilisation techniques. Home exercises that cover flexibility and strengthening are imperative for an optimal recovery. It is important to become strong around your core and gluteal muscles to provide stability around your spine and pelvis. It is equally important that you are flexible through the muscles around your pelvis and have good nerve flexibility.

Most cases of sciatica can resolve within a few weeks without surgical intervention. Your physiotherapist can guide you along this journey to recovery by providing specific exercises to your case.

Patients who suffer from severe, non-resolving pain or red flags may be candidates for surgery.

