



Getting You On

THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

A Quarterly Newsletter from Peninsula Rehab & Sport Medicine

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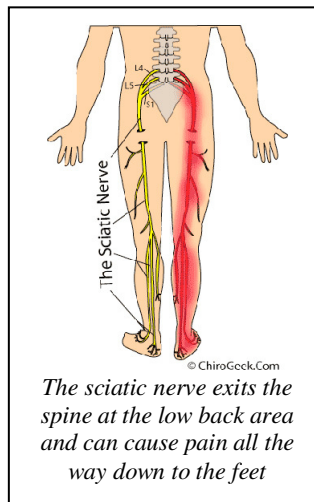
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SCIATIC PAIN- A Common Ailment. Symptoms and Treatment

The most common symptom from sciatica is pain. Most people describe a deep, severe pain that starts low on one side of the back and then shoots down through the buttock and into the leg with certain movements.

The pain is usually worse with both prolonged sitting and standing. Some people describe the worst pain when trying to stand from a low sitting position, such as standing up after sitting on a toilet seat. In others, the pain is made worse by sneezing, coughing, or laughing. Along with the pain you may also notice a weakness in your leg or foot. The weakness may become so bad you can't move your foot.

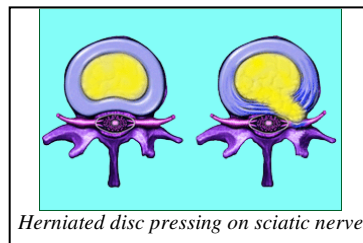
Sciatica is caused by irritation of the sciatic nerve. Most of the time you will not remember doing anything to hurt yourself. Occasionally, you will suddenly get pain after lifting something heavy or moving quickly.



The sciatic nerve exits the spine at the low back area and can cause pain all the way down to the feet

The largest nerve in the body, the sciatic nerve begins from nerve roots in the lumbar part of the spinal chord (the low back) extends through the buttock area sending nerve endings down to the leg. Here are some of the causes of sciatic pain:

- ① The sciatic nerve may be **pinched or stretched**.
- ② A **herniated disc** (sometimes called a slipped disc) is the most common cause of sciatica. Discs are the cushions between the vertebrae. They act like "shock absorbers" when we move, bend, and lift. They are like checkers in size and shape. There is a tough ring around the outside and a thick jellylike center inside (called a nucleus pulposus). If the outer edge of the disc herniates or ruptures, the center can push through and press on the sciatic nerve, leading to the pain of sciatica.
- ③ **Spinal stenosis** is a narrowing of the canal that contains the spinal cord. As we age, the bone can overgrow and put pressure on the sciatic nerve. Many people with spinal stenosis have sciatica on both sides of the back.
- ④ **Spondylolisthesis** is a condition in which one backbone has slipped forward over another backbone, resulting in pressure on the sciatic nerve.



- ⑤ **Piriformis syndrome** causes the sciatic nerve to become trapped deep in the buttock by the piriformis muscle. The symptoms are the same as those of sciatica.

Sciatica can also be caused by other effects of aging, such as osteoarthritis and osteoporosis. There can be many other causes of sciatic pain as well. So if you are unable to get relief with conventional treatment, you should consult your physician to determine if your pain is being caused by something other than sciatica.

Treatments: It's always best to consult your healthcare professional before you begin a treatment program. If you sure have is sciatica, it is very likely that you can find some relief by applying cold or heat, doing some simple exercises or a combination of all three.



Before you do any of these exercises, be sure to talk to your doctor or physical therapist. Not everyone will be able to physically perform some of these exercises, so you need to find the ones that are right for you and how to perform them properly.

Sit on the floor, with your back supported against something if you are more comfortable that way. Raise your leg as if to put your ankle just above the opposite knee. Grab your foot and pull up gently as far as you can. Hold for 30 seconds. Release your leg to the floor gently, and repeat two or three more times. You can do this on both sides, even if you don't have sciatica in the other side.

An alternative is to sit in a chair. Cross your leg (on the side that hurts) resting your ankle just above the knee (see photo above). Now lean forward from the hip gently and slowly, as far as you can keeping your back as straight as possible, Hold for 30 seconds and repeat two or three more times. Again, doing both sides is okay.

These exercises should not cause any pain in your back, knees or ankles, so stop immediately if you feel any pain. The pain in your sciatic nerve should not get worse when you do this – it should “hurt so good” as you begin to feel the stretch providing some relief.

The following links will take you to some videos made by physical therapists instructing you how to do some stretches that relieve sciatica.

This one is done sitting in a chair and is quite simple to do.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5rBN1FE48I&NR=1>

This one is done with your leg folded underneath in front of you and is a bit more difficult. Not everyone will be able to do this one.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFiLb6BJtG4>



The next links show two that are done lying down on your back and should be



fairly easy to perform.

<http://www.lower-back-pain-toolkit.com/piriformis-stretches.html>

http://www.ehow.com/video_4398858_piriformis-stretch-exercise-good-posture.html

PICNIC SAFETY

It's Not All Hot Dogs and Ants!

Burgers and dogs off the grill are delicious! But once you cook them, eat them, or pack them away in your cooler along with that potato salad or coleslaw. Keep cold food cold, hot food hot. Potato salad on ice, baked beans on the grill. Following these guidelines from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration can help to avoid food poisoning in hot weather.

Pack smart. Use a roomy cooler with plenty of space for ice or gel packs, which are most efficient if placed *on top* of the food. Chill foods before packing and have a separate cooler for drinks to avoid opening and closing your food cooler so often. Don't take food out until you are going to eat it, and

always pack up again after you eat. You can always go back and get something later. The longer food sits out at a picnic, the more likely you are to take a chance on breeding bacteria in your food. Take along antibacterial towelettes or portable sani-soap.

Ants and food poisoning aren't the only threat at a picnic.

Each year, more than 187,000 volleyball related injuries alone are treated in hospitals, doctors' offices, clinics, ambulatory surgery centers and hospital emergency rooms.

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons offers the following tips to prevent volleyball injuries. These tips are valuable for playing other sports as well:

Always take time to warm up and stretch. This may feel more like an annoyance and unnecessary, but research studies have proven that cold muscles are more prone to injury. Warm up with jumping jacks, stationary cycling or running or walking in place for 3 to 5 minutes. Then slowly and gently stretch, holding each stretch for 30 seconds.

- Use knee pads to protect yourself from injury when you fall or dive onto the court or into home plate
- Wearing pants instead of shorts (defensive pants for volley ball) can protect you from floor burns, scrapes, cuts, and bruises.
- Wear the right shoes that provide strong ankle and arch support and offer good shock absorption.
- Be knowledgeable about first aid and be able to administer it for minor injuries, such as facial cuts, bruises, or minor tendinitis, strains, or sprains.
- Be prepared for emergency situations and have a plan to



reach medical personnel to treat injuries such as concussions, dislocations, elbow contusions, wrist or finger sprains, and fractures. Being prepared with knowledge of how to help immediately could potentially prevent a more serious problem, or even save someone's life.

- Before playing an outdoor game, always check the ground for sharp objects and glass.

And last but not least, remember what your own capabilities are.

RECOGNIZING A STROKE AND WHAT TO DO

It has become widely known that if you can recognize a stroke and get help for the victim within 3 hours, their chances of full recovery become much greater.

Watch for these stroke symptoms if you think you or someone else is having a stroke:

- ⓐ **Trouble walking.** You may stumble or have sudden dizziness, loss of balance or loss of coordination.
- ⓐ **Trouble speaking.** You may slur your speech or may not be able to come up with words to explain what is happening (aphasia). Try to repeat a simple sentence. If you can't, you may be having a stroke.
- ⓐ **Paralysis or numbness on one side of the body.** You may have sudden numbness, weakness or paralysis on one side of the body. Try to raise both your arms over your head at the same time. If one arm begins to fall, you may be having a stroke.
- ⓐ **Trouble seeing.** You may suddenly have blurred or blackened vision or may see double.
- ⓐ **Headache.** A sudden, severe "bolt out of the blue" headache or an unusual headache, which may be accompanied by a stiff neck, facial pain, pain between your eyes, vomiting or altered consciousness, sometimes indicates you're having a stroke.

For most people, a stroke gives no warning. But one possible sign of an impending stroke is a transient ischemic attack (TIA). A TIA is a temporary interruption of blood flow to a part of your brain. The signs and symptoms of TIA are the same as for a stroke, but they last for a shorter period — several minutes to 24 hours — and then disappear, without leaving apparent permanent effects. You may have more than one TIA, and the recurrent signs and symptoms may be similar or different.

A TIA may indicate that you're at risk of a full-blown stroke. People who have had a TIA are much more likely to have a stroke than are those who haven't had a TIA.

When to see a doctor:

If you notice any signs or symptoms of a stroke or TIA, get medical help right away. A TIA may seem like a passing event. But it's an important warning sign — and a chance to take steps that may prevent a stroke.

If someone appears to be having a stroke, watch the person carefully while waiting for an ambulance. You may need to take additional actions in the following situations:

- ⓐ If the person stops breathing, begin mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
- ⓐ If vomiting occurs, turn the person's head to the side. This can prevent choking.

- ⓐ Don't let the person eat or drink anything.

Every minute counts when it comes to treating a stroke or TIA. In fact, sometimes a stroke is referred to as a "brain attack" to convey that, similar to a heart attack, quick care is important. So, don't wait to see if the signs and symptoms go away. The longer a stroke goes untreated, the greater the damage and potential disability. The success of most stroke treatments depends on how soon a person is seen by a doctor in a hospital emergency room after signs and symptoms begin.

FACERCISE!

Looks Silly! Can It Erase Years From Your Face?

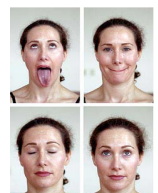
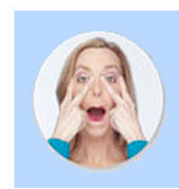
It looks like you are making faces at your grandkids! What's really going on though is exercising the muscles in your face. The muscles in your face are like any other muscles in your body. If they don't get



Carole Maggio, Creator of Facercise

exercised, they go soft and sag.

Carole Maggio is a licensed aesthetician and bestselling author who has spent decades researching facial exercise techniques. Her program can be purchased like any other exercise video or book, but you can find plenty of them on line to



target your own problem areas. You won't get the same results as a surgical face lift, but you should see some results simply because the muscles in the face tighten up with the exercises.

Try doing them with your kids! Maybe you won't feel so silly!

THE CIVIC CENTER

Have some time on your hands, or just want to enrich your life? Here are some ideas for volunteering your time for good causes:

- 📍 Area Hospitals
- 📍 Humane Society
- 📍 Nursing Homes
- 📍 Veteran's Hospitals
- 📍 Big Brother and Big Sister Programs
- 📍 Volunteer Fire Departments
- 📍 Local Libraries
- 📍 There are even ways to volunteer your time on line:
 - Research
 - Writing and Editing
 - Consulting
 - Translating

Check out the *United Nations Volunteers Online*
<http://www.onlinevolunteering.org/en/vol/index.html>

This link talks about the Myths of Online Volunteering.
<http://www.coyotecomunications.com/volunteer/ovmyths.html>

Host a bake sale to raise money for Share our Strength – A National program to help end childhood hunger.
http://gabs.strength.org/site/PageServer?pagename=GABS_homepage

Check it out. You don't even have to get out of your jammies!

The Newsletter is now available to everyone in a PDF format. We encourage you to receive your Newsletter electronically. Send an e-mail to: maggiepenrehab@hotmail.com. Your e-mail address will be added to our list for electronic delivery.

We will not use your e-mail address for any other purpose than sending the Newsletter on a quarterly and/or update basis, and we will not share your e-mail address with any one else.

Save a tree.  Get your Newsletter electronically!

Links you might find useful and interesting:

NOTICE: If you receive this newsletter electronically, you can automatically connect to any of the links in the Newsletter by mousing over the link and pressing Control then Click.

If you receive a paper newsletter, it is necessary to manually type the link address into your address line on your browser.

Information about Sciatica from the Mayo Clinic
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/sciatica/DS00516>

Picnic Ideas: Planning, Recipes and Games
<http://www.picnicrecipesandgames.com/>

Mayo Clinic information on Recognizing Stroke and what to do. This site will also talk about causes, risk factors, prevention and much more.
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stroke/DS00150/DSECTION=symptoms>

Watch a video demonstration of Facercise with Carole Maggio.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UiqMYLoFMF4>

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We will remove your name from the mailing list immediately.

Next Issue: October 2010

**Are you A Couch Potato?
Benefits of Good Posture
Being a Caregiver**

MORE We encourage your requests for topics that are of interest to you!

Peninsula Rehab & Sports Medicine is a state-of-the art Physical Therapy facility specializing in:

- * Orthopedics
- * Sports Medicine
- * Industrial Rehabilitation
- * Ergonomics
- * Manual Therapy
- * The needs of the active retirement community

with the goal of getting you on the road to recovery and back to the activities you enjoy.

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