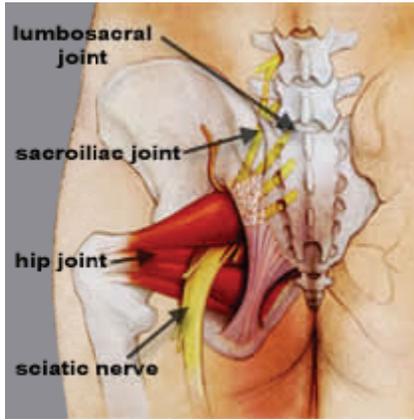


A Patient's Guide to Sciatica



What is Sciatica?

Sciatica is a severe pain felt along the sciatic nerve, which runs from the lower back, through the buttock and into the lower legs. Each sciatic nerve consists of five smaller nerves extending from the lower spinal column, which then join together and travel down the legs. The sciatic nerves divide into tiny smaller nerves traveling to the knee, foot, toes, calf and thigh. The inflammation of any of these nerves is called sciatica.

What is the Sciatic Nerve?

The sciatic nerve is the longest and widest nerve in the body. It controls strength of the muscles of the lower leg and provides sensation to the thighs, legs and soles of the feet.

How does Sciatica develop?

The sciatic nerve is very long, so there are many places along its length where irritation of the nerve may occur. One possible point of irritation is where the nerve root exits the spine in the low back. In our practice, we have found that it is much more likely for the sciatic nerve to become irritated by scar tissue as it travels between the muscles of the buttock and the back of the leg. The most common sights of irritation are at the piriformis, superior gemelles and between the hamstrings. Changes in biomechanics of the hip and pelvis cause increased stress, internal pressure and increased friction that leads to inflammation, and eventually the formation of scar tissue along the sciatic nerve. Scar tissue restricts the movement of the nerve as it passes around the piriformis, leading to inflammation and thus pain.

What does Sciatica feel like?

The sciatic nerve is very large and produces many different symptom patterns. The most common symptom is pain that radiates along the path of the sciatic nerve from the lower back and down one leg. There is often a mild tingling or burning sensation that can be felt along this same path. Some people experience a "pins and needles" sensation, most often in the toes or foot, or numbness/muscle weakness of the affected leg or foot. Usually these symptoms begin slowly and gradually intensify over time. Prolonged sitting, bending over or straightening the leg often worsen the condition. Also, sciatica can produce localized pain in the hip or upper leg.

What is the treatment for Sciatica?

In our office, we use a combination of chiropractic treatments, Active Release Technique (ART) soft tissue manipulation, and rehabilitation to allow restoration of proper biomechanics to the spine, hips and pelvis. The key to fully resolving sciatica is the use of chiropractic adjustments and ART to fully release all the restricted areas along the entire sciatic nerve.

Ways We Treat Your Sciatica:

Chiropractic

- Chiropractic is a natural healing approach that promotes a healthy, pain-free lifestyle without the use of drugs or surgery. An adjustment is a hands-on therapy that delivers a controlled pressure that restores proper motion to a restricted joint.

Active Release Technique (ART)

- ART is a manual therapy that corrects muscular and soft-tissue problems caused by the formation of adhesive or scar tissues. Adhesions/scar tissue occur naturally in the body in response to overuse or cumulative trauma.

Flexibility

- Good flexibility enables muscles and joints to move through their full range of motion. Poor flexibility leads to a higher chance of injury to muscles, tendons and ligaments.

Strength

- Strength training is essential for the rehabilitation of any injury. When new tissue is laid down to repair an area, it is very thin and weak. If this tissue is not properly re-strengthened, it can lead to re-injury.

Proprioception

- Proprioception describes the body's ability to react appropriately to external forces. It also helps rebuild proper motor patterns of the body. Proprioceptive exercises form the basis for the agility, strength, and endurance for complete rehabilitation.



With our combination of different treatments, resolution can be seen in over 90 percent of sciatica cases. Effective treatment of the back and hip, or any soft tissue injury, requires an alteration in tissue structure to break up the restrictive cross-fiber adhesions and restore normal function to the affected soft tissue areas. When executed properly, this process substantially decreases healing time, treats the root cause of the injury, and improves athletic performance. Active Chiropractic and Rehabilitation Clinic is very successful at treating this type of injury. Our therapies remove restrictive adhesions between both the superficial and deep tissue structures along the entire kinetic chain. This comprehensive approach creates a complete, time efficient healing process.



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