

Alpha Physical Therapy

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SCIATICA

What is Sciatica? The term *sciatica* is often used to describe any form of pain that radiates into the leg. However, true sciatica is pain along the large sciatic nerve that runs from the lower back down the back of the leg. This is a quite common form of low back and leg pain. The pain along the sciatic nerve is caused when a nerve root that helps form the sciatic nerve is pinched or irritated.

What causes Sciatica? This is usually caused by a pressure on the sciatic nerve from a herniated disc. Most sciatic syndromes result from inflammation and will get better within two weeks to a few months. Sciatica generally occurs in people between ages 30-50. Typically an injury does not cause sciatica, it frequently develops as a result of wear and tear of the lower spine.



What are the symptoms of sciatica?

- Burning/tingling down the leg
- Weakness/numbness/difficulty moving leg or foot
- A constant pain on one side of the rear
- A shooting pain that makes it difficult to stand
- Pain in rear worse when sitting

Treatment

To be the most useful, the sciatica exercises recommended for specific conditions must be done regularly. Paying close attention to proper posture and body mechanics is also important to getting the maximum benefit. You will want to start a program of gentle exercise and stretching.



Exercise is more productive for sciatic pain than bedrest. Rest may be recommended for a day or two when there is a flare-up, but that is longest you should remain inactive. Most sciatic exercise programs focus on strengthening the abdominals and back muscles to allow for more support of the back. Stretching sciatic target muscles (such as the piriformis) that cause pain when they are tight.