



**THE PHYSICAL
THERAPY INSTITUTE**
ORTHOPEDICS AND SPORTS MEDICINE

NEWSLETTER

Helping You Move Through Life
Pain-Free!



PHYSICAL THERAPY SOLUTIONS FOR SCIATICA & BACK PAIN

Are you experiencing pain in your leg or numbness in your foot? Are these symptoms making it difficult for you to go about your daily routine? You could be suffering from sciatica.

Sciatica is often a debilitating condition that is a result of compression or inflammation of the sciatic nerve. The condition most commonly is associated with pain radiating down the leg. It can be so severe that people struggle to do normal activities of daily living. While “sciatica” may sound serious, it’s entirely curable.

Call our clinic today to make an appointment. With guidance from your physical therapist, you can find solutions to your pain and get back to living the life you enjoy!

HOW CAN YOU TELL IF YOU HAVE SCIATICA?

Although sciatica is a commonly used term, it may also cause confusion because it is sometimes used to describe any type of back or leg pain. But “true” sciatica refers to pain that radiates downwards from the lower back/buttock region along the course of the nerve into the thigh and lower leg. Symptoms that extend below the knee and into the lower leg and foot are consistent with a true sciatica.

Not all patients have pain. Some patients experience paresthesias (i.e. numbness and tingling) along the sciatic nerve’s path in the leg and foot. For some, the condition may include weakness in the muscles of the foot and lower leg. In serious cases, it can include changes to bowel and bladder function.

While sciatica pain can be intense, it is treatable. For a lot of people, physical therapy can help to resolve sciatica without operation – often within just a few weeks. Even if you’ve suffered severe sciatica spawned from leg weakness, bladder changes or nerve issues, there’s still hope.

WHAT CAUSES SCIATICA?

In most cases, sciatica is caused by a herniated lumbar disc where the nerve root is irritated by disc material that has ruptured. Recent evidence suggests that sciatica is not because of “compression” but a combination of pressure, inflammation and immune system defenses.

In most cases, a physical therapist can help to identify what is causing the condition and how to successfully resolve it. The combination of education and activity modification can help set the stage for a successful outcome.

Visit Us Online www.physicaltherapyinstitute.com or Call **724-503-6993** Today!

THE MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS OF SCIATICA

Sciatica back pain is normally noticed as a pain radiating from the lower back/buttock down the leg below the knee and sometimes into the foot. The dominance of leg pain (more than back pain) is a classic characteristic of sciatica.

The location of the leg pain (i.e. outer calf or back of calf); paraesthesia (i.e. numbness and/or tingling) or loss of sensation, along with weakness and/or reflex changes are all indications of sciatica.

Another clear sign is increased leg pain with coughing, sneezing and/or taking a deep breath. If sciatica isn't treated, it can hinder mobility altogether.

HOW PHYSICAL THERAPY CAN HELP WITH SCIATICA

If you're experiencing sciatica, contact a physical therapist immediately. Your physical therapist will perform a thorough physical examination and based on the findings provide you with solutions that work.

EDUCATION

Understanding exactly what sciatica is and how to manage it can help you be proactive and find a solution for your sciatica. Your therapist knows the solutions that work. Understanding what is going on, and more importantly, what you can do about it, has been shown to be one of the most effective solutions. It seems small but consistently it has been shown to help!

ADVICE TO STAY ACTIVE

It is especially important to stay active early, despite the intensity of the pain that can be associated with sciatica. We know that rest is not an effective solution. Your physical therapist can help you identify modifications to painful tasks and help you be safe and active.

EXERCISE THERAPY

Supervised exercises are vital to a successful outcome. A physical therapist will tailor your exercises, monitor you and progress you based on your individual needs. Supervised exercise therapy includes directional exercises, proper postural exercises, nerve mobilization, or strength exercises.

The McKenzie Method is a technique that has been shown to be effective in identifying movements and positions to provide you with relief and is often used for home exercises.

SPINAL MANUAL THERAPY

Physical therapists often use spinal manual therapy for their patients with sciatica. Manual therapies include a variety of techniques that move one or more joints within normal ranges of motion with the aim of improving spinal joint motion or function. It can also include soft tissue techniques that help to alleviate pain and allow for more mobility and improved function.

CALL OUR CLINIC TODAY

These treatments, hand-picked by professionals, can completely eliminate sciatica over time. If you're experiencing back pain, don't wait. Call one of our physical therapists today and schedule your first appointment to have your condition assessed and your back pain treated, once and for all.

Sources <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK507908/> • <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33017565/> • <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1836955320300229?via%3Dihub> • <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1836955320300229?via%3Dihub> • <https://www.bmj.com/content/367/bmj.l6273> • <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29602304/>

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NO DOCTOR'S PRESCRIPTION NEEDED!

In the state of Pennsylvania you have direct access to physical therapy.

Visit Us Online www.physicaltherapyinstitute.com or Call **724-503-6993** Today!

FREE IN-PERSON WORKSHOPS

www.physicaltherapyinstitute.com/workshops/

The Physical Therapy Institute hosts FREE workshops that focus on a specific type of pain or condition at select PTI locations. These hour-long workshops are hosted by the physical therapist at the clinic, and focus on getting you back to normal naturally, without the use of medications, injections or surgeries. To register for the workshops, follow the link above! To learn more about the workshops, please call 724-503-6993 or email jwatkins@pt-institute.com.

RSVP TODAY!
FREE KNEE, LOW BACK, &
SHOULDER PAIN WORKSHOPS

PATIENT SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT



"I had shoulder surgery but was skeptical about doing therapy. After a couple of weeks into my rehab, I am making great improvements thanks to the staff of PTI. They have me doing some effective stretching exercises and slowly introducing weights. Everyone is very friendly and professional. I am glad I chose to do my rehab here." — J.M.

WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR SUCCESS STORY!

Click below to tell your PT story and leave your review. We look forward to hearing from you!

 **REVIEWS**

www.physicaltherapyinstitute.com



SEASONAL RECIPE VANILLA SHORTBREAD HEARTS



Ingredients:

- 2 c. all-purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 c. unsalted butter
- 3/4 c. confectioners' sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- confectioners' sugar, for decoration
- 1/2 c. seedless raspberry jam

Directions: In a small bowl, combine flour and salt. In a large bowl, with electric mixer on medium-high speed, beat butter and confectioners' sugar until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Beat in vanilla. On low speed, beat in flour mixture just until blended. Shape dough into 2 disks; wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm, at least 2 hours or overnight. Preheat oven to 300 degrees F. Line 2 large cookie sheets with parchment paper. Between 2 sheets of floured wax paper, roll 1 disk 1/8-inch thick. With floured 3-inch heart-shape cookie cutter, cut out cookies. Cut out centers of half cookies with floured 1 1/2-inch heart-shape cookie cutter. Slide cookies on wax paper to another large cookie sheet and refrigerate about 15 minutes, or until firm. Remove heart-shape centers from cookies; place cookies on prepared sheets, 1 inch apart. Bake 13 to 15 minutes, or until edges are lightly golden. Cool on parchment paper on wire racks. Repeat with remaining dough, re-rolling scraps. Sift confectioners' sugar over cookies with cut-out centers. Spread 1 teaspoon jam on each plain cookie; top with remaining cookies to form sandwiches.



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