

PIRIFORMIS SYNDROME (Hip/Buttocks Pain)

◆ What is it?

Piriformis syndrome is a rare nerve condition in the hip, causing pain and occasionally loss of feeling in the back of the thigh, often to the bottom of the foot. It involves compression of the sciatic nerve at the hip by the piriformis muscle. The piriformis muscle rotates the hip, allowing the thigh, foot, and knee to point outward. The piriformis muscle travels from the pelvis to the outer hip. The sciatic nerve usually passes the hip between this muscle and other muscles of the hip. Occasionally (15% to 20% of the time) the nerve travels directly through the muscle, causing pressure on the nerve.

Tightness of the piriformis muscle and hip abductor muscles can also cause deep buttock pain without the sciatic pain down the leg as well. Oftentimes, healthcare providers will also refer to this as piriformis syndrome despite the classic nerve symptoms being present as well.

◆ Signs and Symptoms of this Condition

- Tingling, numbness, or burning in the back of the thigh to the knee and occasionally the bottom of the foot.
- Pain and tenderness in the buttock.
- Pain and discomfort (burning, dull ache, or throbbing) in the hip, mid-buttock area, or back of the thigh and sometimes to the knee.
- Heaviness or fatigue of the leg.
- Pain that is worse with sports activities, such as running, jumping, long walks, and walking up stairs or hills, and is often felt at night or with prolonged sitting (especially on a hard surface).

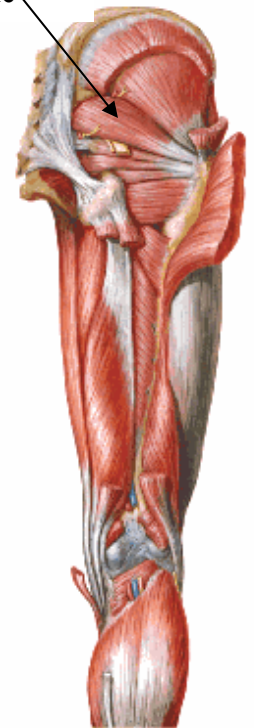
◆ Causes

- Pressure on the sciatic nerve at the hip by anything that may cause the piriformis muscle to spasm and constrict the nerve can cause this syndrome. This includes strain from a sudden increase in the amount or intensity of activity or overuse of the lower extremity. It may also be due to compensation of other extremity injuries.
- Tight piriformis muscle.
- Direct pressure from wallet or sitting on a hard surface.

◆ What Can I do to Prevent Piriformis Syndrome?

- Appropriately warm up and stretch before practice or competition.
- Maintain appropriate conditioning:
 - Hip flexibility

Piriformis Muscle



- Strength and endurance
- Cardiovascular fitness

➤ Avoid placing wallet in the hip pocket on the symptomatic side/hip.

◆ Prognosis

➤ This condition is usually curable with appropriate treatment, or sometimes it heals spontaneously, within 2 to 6 weeks.

◆ Treatment

- Rest – no running, jumping, hiking (especially running or hiking hills) while treating the problem.
- Piriformis and hip abductor muscle stretching. **See Below** Once a stretch of the involved muscle is obtained, hold the stretch 30 seconds and repeat 3 repetitions (with 30 second to 1 minute rest between repetitions). Perform this stretching twice per day.
- Slowly progress back into jogging once you are symptom-free.

