

Piriformis Syndrome

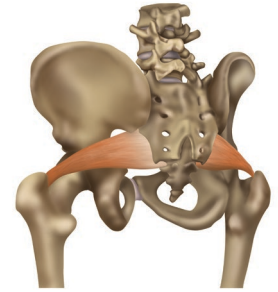
Patient Information Sheet

What do I need to know?

What is my diagnosis?

Piriformis is a muscle deep in the buttock which works to rotate the leg outwards.

The sciatic nerve travels near or through the muscle and can get compressed at this point.



Frequent signs and symptoms

- Tingling, numbness, burning in back of thigh, occasionally to the foot
- Tenderness in the buttock
- Dull ache/burning in hip, groin, mid buttock, back of thigh
- Heaviness or fatigue of the leg
- Worse with sitting on hard chair.

Causes of piriformis syndrome

- Pressure on the sciatic nerve by piriformis muscle
- Sudden increase in amount or intensity of activity
- Compensation from other lower extremity injuries.

Risk of piriformis syndrome increases with

- Sports with running, jumping
- Prolonged walking, walking up stairs or hills
- Poor physical conditioning (lack of strength, flexibility).

How can it be treated?

- Ice packs x 20 mins regularly to reduce inflammation
- Rest from the aggravating activity
- Flexibility and strength exercises – *see overleaf*
- Heat to help improve flexibility
- Pain killers eg paracetamol and/or anti inflammatories eg ibuprofen – *take as directed*
- Occasionally an injection of corticosteroid may help
- Very rarely surgery is indicated.



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FLEXIBILITY exercises:



Hold each position
for 30 seconds



STRENGTHENING exercises:



Massage glutes on tennis ball



Physiotherapy

- Edinburgh self referral– complete form
- East Lothian self referral– telephone
- Midlothian – referral from GP
- West Lothian – referral from GP

Where To Find Us – Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy ([nhslothian.scot](https://services.nhslothian.scot))
<https://services.nhslothian.scot/musculoskeletal/where-to-find-us/>