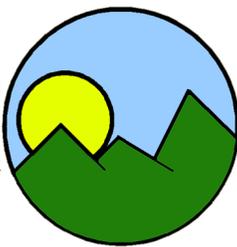


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Health Center

Ancient Ways to Modern Health
Nathaníel Novgrad MAcOM, LAc.

(828) 283 - 0268
www.oldmtnmedicine.com
nate@oldmtnmedicine.com

Simple Sciatica Tips / Facts

- **Sciatica actually describes a symptom, not a disease / diagnosis.**
 - Sciatica means pain, numbness, tingling, or loss of motor function along the path of the Sciatic nerve which runs through the low back, buttocks, and down the back/side of the leg all the way to the foot. There can be many different reasons for sciatic pain including; herniated spinal discs, mis-aligned vertebrae, muscle spasm, spinal stenosis [calcium build up in the spine that closes the holes the nerves pass through], and tumors of the spine.
- **Don't sit on your wallet!**
 - I said they would be simple tips! The added pressure on the musculature of the hip and buttocks can cause spasms that either compress the sciatic nerve or cause pain and symptoms that resemble sciatic pain. This is particularly important for people who drive / sit for a living such as truck drivers, office workers, and police officers.
- **Walk, Walk, Walk.**
 - Even relatively small amounts of gentle exercise such as walking can greatly improve the pain, numbness, tingling, and motor function difficulties that make up Sciatica.
 - If the walking is too painful at first start with an even lower impact exercise such as swimming or Tai Chi. As the pain level decreases you can add walking to your routine.
 - Gentle exercise helps relax the muscles of the pelvic / hip girdle and can assist in relieving the pain and preventing it from happening again.
- **Stretch. Simple stretching can alleviate and prevent Sciatica in many people.**
 - In 15% of individuals the sciatic nerve runs through the piriformis muscle in the hip rather than under it. When there is tightness in this muscle it compresses the nerve and causes pain along its route. Even in individuals who don't have the nerve running through the muscle tightness in the hip muscles can lead to sciatic pain so stretching is important.
 - The simplest stretch that is effective in loosening up the hip area involved is done seated. Cross your legs [like a lady not a gentleman] with the painful side's leg on top. Then hug that knee to the opposite shoulder with both arms. That's it. Hold for at least 30 seconds or as long as is comfortable. It can be done almost anywhere; at work, on the bus, on the couch even!
- **Get it checked out!**
 - It is important to find out why you are having pain and not just treat the symptoms. Therefore, you should see a health care professional and find out what is going on. There are many different treatment options depending on the cause.
 - Simple orthopedic exams can rule out disc involvement but it is better to make sure it isn't a tumor or stenosis in which surgery may be the best treatment method. For individuals with disc involvement and / or muscle spasm causing the sciatic pain Acupuncture can be extremely useful. If it is caused by a mis-aligned vertebrae Chiropractic adjustments can alleviate the pain quickly and easily.