



Piriformis Syndrome

The 'piriformis' is a muscle within your buttocks. It is one of several muscles that rotate your leg outwards (external rotation). The sciatic nerve (which originates from the spinal cord) travels under and sometimes through the piriformis muscle. Trauma to, or spasm of the the muscle can create pressure on the nerve. This may result in numbness and/or tingling in the buttock and back of the thigh. The area of muscle will also be tender to palpation.

Initially, treatment will focus on decreasing the inflammation and irritation using therapeutic modalities, soft tissue techniques, ice and decreasing the aggravating factors. Stretches will be prescribed to loosen the muscle and decrease the pressure on the nerve.

The therapeutic modalities commonly used include:

Ultrasound: uses sound waves and may be used to decrease scar tissue, increase blood flow, or decrease pain.

Interferential Current: uses electrical current to decrease pain, can also be used to elicit muscle contraction and decrease swelling.

Acupuncture: uses small, solid needles to encourage healing, reduce pain, and improve function of affected areas of the body.

What can you do at home?

Rest: by decreasing your activity you allow your body a chance to heal itself. When you start to feel better it is important to ease back into activities which might be aggravating. Listen to your body - pain means that you have done too much.

Ice: ice decreases the metabolism of your cells so that they do not die despite a decrease in oxygen to the injured area. Ice should be kept on for approximately 15 minutes, several times a day. The injured area should be elevated (above the level of your heart) at the same time. Use a wet towel between the ice and your skin to protect against frostbite. You can use frozen veggies, cold packs, or real ice.

