

NOT THE USUAL SUSPECT

While sciatica is usually blamed on a bulging intervertebral disc pressing on the sciatic nerve, there may be another culprit. The piriformis muscle starts at the side of the tailbone and stretches over to the head of the femur. All the adductor muscles (which work to pull the legs closer to the midline of the body) lie under the sciatic nerve, with the exception of the piriformis muscle. When this muscle pulls tight enough, it may press on the sciatic nerve. While both a bulging disc and a tightened piriformis muscle can press upon the sciatic nerve to cause pain, disc-related pain usually goes all the way down to the foot. Piriformis-related pain usually goes no further than the knees.

Physical therapy is one of the most common and popular conservative medical treatment option for sciatica. Physical therapy consists of exercises and stretches, which help to restore function and increase mobility and strength. You have the right to choose where you go for physical therapy. If you or a family member needs physical therapy, consider receiving these services at ISR Physical Therapy.

*The physical therapist can prescribe stretching exercises designed to prevent the piriformis muscle from becoming so tight that it leads to sciatica.



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