

Information Sheet

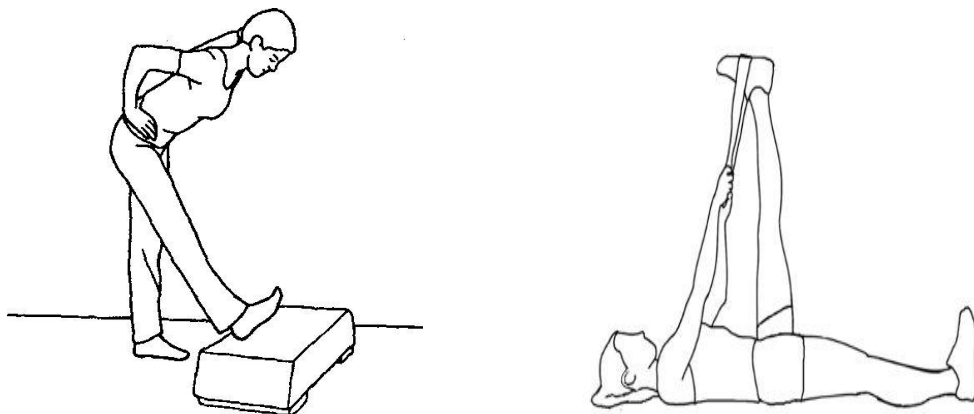
Sciatic Pain

Sciatica can have a variety of causes and **it is always important to have a proper medical diagnosis** before embarking on any treatment program. However, there are some simple techniques you can use at home to relieve the painful symptoms.

NB. This information does not replace a medical diagnosis but is intended as a guide. Always seek professional advice before beginning a program of self-help.

Self-help

1. Stay active! Nerves like to be kept moving so avoid sitting in the same position for long periods whenever possible.
2. Stretch the sciatic nerve. Picture one (below) is a good starting point and the step you stretch from can be raised to give a bigger stretch as your flexibility improves. Once this first stretch can be done with ease then move on to stretch two as illustrated. Stretches should be held for 15-30 seconds until you feel a release, but you can build up to this gradually. They should be held to your maximum ability, which means you feel the stretch in the tissue, but the muscle is not shaking or struggling to hold the position. Aim to do 3 or 4 times a day but always stretch after any periods of sitting.



3. Applying pressure into the nerve point in the buttock can be very effective and a tennis ball is a simple way to achieve this at home. Rest/sit on the tennis ball for up to a minute, this may feel tender but should not be painful, it is used to alleviate pain - **not** cause more.
4. Nerve pain does not always respond well to heat although this may feel soothing and comforting when you are in pain, but by warming the area you can inadvertently bring more inflammation to the tissues. Ice packs can be more effective and help reduce pain when applied locally for 20 minutes only. Wrap the ice in a towel to avoid an ice burn and apply to the affected area. This can be repeated every two hours if necessary but is good to use after periods of sitting or before retiring for the night.

*Please note, this is intended as a guide to how you can help improve the symptoms of sciatica at home. Should you require any further or more specific advice, please do not hesitate to contact me.