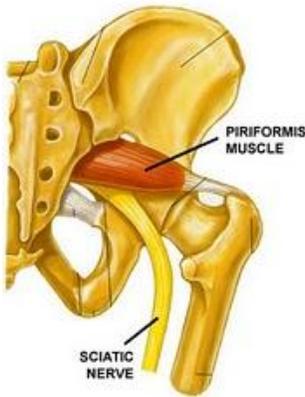




# Scotland Massage Therapy

## Do You Have a Pain in the Butt?

No, I'm not talking about your spouse, your kids or your bills! Many people at some point will experience a burning pain in the glute or buttock area that can extend down the outside/rear of the thigh. Most people are familiar with this type of pain as 'Sciatica'. In some cases, the sciatic nerve is being pinched where it exits the spinal column from L4 to S2 either through a subluxated or rotated vertebrae, or a herniated disc (all of which are true 'Sciatica'), but often the pain is coming from an overly tight piriformis muscle resulting in 'Piriformis Syndrome'. The piriformis is a small muscle that lies underneath the large gluteus maximus muscle of the buttocks. It attaches to the front of the sacrum (the triangular shaped bone at the base of the spine), and onto the greater trochanter of the femur (the bump on the side of the thigh about where your wrist hangs against your leg). This muscle is responsible for rotating the leg outwards, and also lifting it straight out to the side when the hip is flexed to ninety degrees. The sciatic nerve runs under the belly of the piriformis in 90% of people. In the remaining 10% the nerve actually runs through the muscle, but this anomaly does not mean that there is an increased risk of Piriformis Syndrome.



Sitting for prolonged periods, sports that require pushing off a leg, running, using step machines, imbalances in the muscles around the pelvis (especially during late pregnancy), habitually sitting on a wallet, trauma to the piriformis (fall), repetitive strain (repeated bending and lifting, squatting putting down a heavy object), prolonged driving, prolonged sitting with knees out and ankles together (the muscle is shortened in this position and atrophies in a shorter length), flat feet (excessive internal rotation of the leg can occur and the piriformis tries to counteract this) are some of the causes of this condition. Massage therapy can help to release the muscle and fascia of the surrounding area. A Soft Tissue Release is performed with pressure applied along the length of the muscle while the therapist passively

internally rotates the leg to stretch the piriformis at the same time. This is a potentially painful treatment which may reproduce the symptoms temporarily during the massage but only to your comfort level. For acute conditions and best results, the treatment is once a week for four to six weeks. However, remember that there is only one person in the world equipped to work on your cure 24 hours a day, and that is you!

Home care is very important in treating this condition. There are many ways to stretch the piriformis but here is a simple stretch that can be done seated at your desk. To stretch the right piriformis muscle:

- Place your right ankle on your left thigh just above the knee with your right knee pointing out
- Push the knee gently towards the ground as far as is comfortable
- With a straight spine slowly bend at the hips and bring your trunk forward towards your legs, making sure to keep your back straight and not slumping forward



- Lean forward to the point of a good 'stretch' feeling, not to the point of pain
- Hold this for 30 seconds
- Alternate and stretch the left piriformis, stretching each side 3 times during a session; repeat frequently throughout the day

With acute pain, make sure to get up from your chair every 30 minutes to stretch, walk and move. A full set of gluteal stretches are beneficial as well. A tennis ball can be placed underneath the buttocks at the most painful area and held there until the discomfort resolves – remember to keep taking full deep breaths to help relax the muscles and body as we often hold our breath and tighten muscles when in pain. Avoid sitting on the feet and rolling the knees outwards, keeping knees and feet in midline with frequent changes of position. If you are a side-sleeper, make sure to place a pillow between your knees. Stretch the piriformis before and after activities such as tennis, volleyball, running, and step machine use. A break from these aggravating sports may be necessary until symptoms are under control. Chiropractic adjustments are useful if the sacroiliac joint is affected, as well as orthotics for flat feet. Self care, chiropractic care and massage therapy combined can help you get rid of the pain in your butt for good!

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