

## SCIATICA

Sciatica is a common term used to describe referred pain into the leg generally from a source in the lower back low back. Sciatica usually occurs following injury to one of the discs in the lower back. The discs act as shock absorbers in the spine and may be injured in numerous ways, the most common being after heavy lifting or following maintaining prolonged positions (E.g. gardening or prolonged sitting). Pain to the leg can be referred from the discs themselves or from compression of one of the spinal nerves.



The type of pain associated with sciatica can vary but is usually a deep ache through the buttock and down the back of the leg (which may radiate all the way down to the foot). Associated neurological signs can be present which include pins and needles, numbness and occasionally weakness. The source of the sciatica can usually be diagnosed through assessment by a physiotherapist and can be confirmed with a CT scan or MRI scan.

Management of sciatica pain is dependent on the severity of the condition. Initially rest from the aggravating factors is required with some analgesic and/or anti-inflammatory medication. Early physiotherapy management is essential to allow for the healing of the injured disc and to promote adequate strengthening.

Treatment will generally consist of:

- Spinal mobilisation
- Soft and deep tissue massage to reduce muscle spasm
- Taping to support the injured area
- An exercise program to improve general mobility
- Prescription of a lumbar support for seated activities
- Clinical Pilates to strengthen the spinal stabilising muscles – This form of management can also assist in preventing further low back injury

Only the most severe cases require further management other than physiotherapy and exercise. Some of these strategies may include injections or surgery. However, many cases respond well to conservative physiotherapy management, particularly when addressed immediately.

### Altona

Cnr Leisure & Mills St  
Altona 3025  
P: 9392 2288  
altona@symmetryphysio.com.au

### Altona Meadows

329 Queen Street  
Altona Meadows 3028  
P: 9360 9744  
altonameadows@symmetryphysio.com.au

### Port Melbourne

101 Beach Road  
Port Melbourne 3207  
P: 9645 2183  
portmelbourne@symmetryphysio.com.au

### Hoppers Crossing

333 Old Geelong Road  
Hoppers Crossing 3029  
P: 9369 4999  
hoppers@symmetryphysio.com.au

### Tarneit

412 Derimut Road  
Tarneit 3029  
P: 8742 2088  
tarneit@symmetryphysio.com.au

### Taylors Lakes

1/900 Old Calder Hwy  
Keilor 3038  
P: 9390 8488  
taylors@symmetryphysio.com.au