

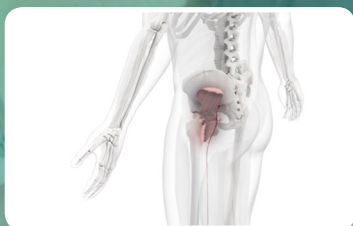
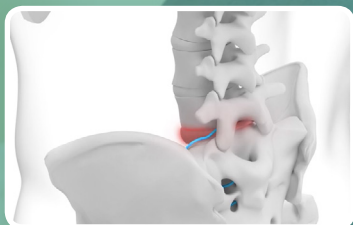
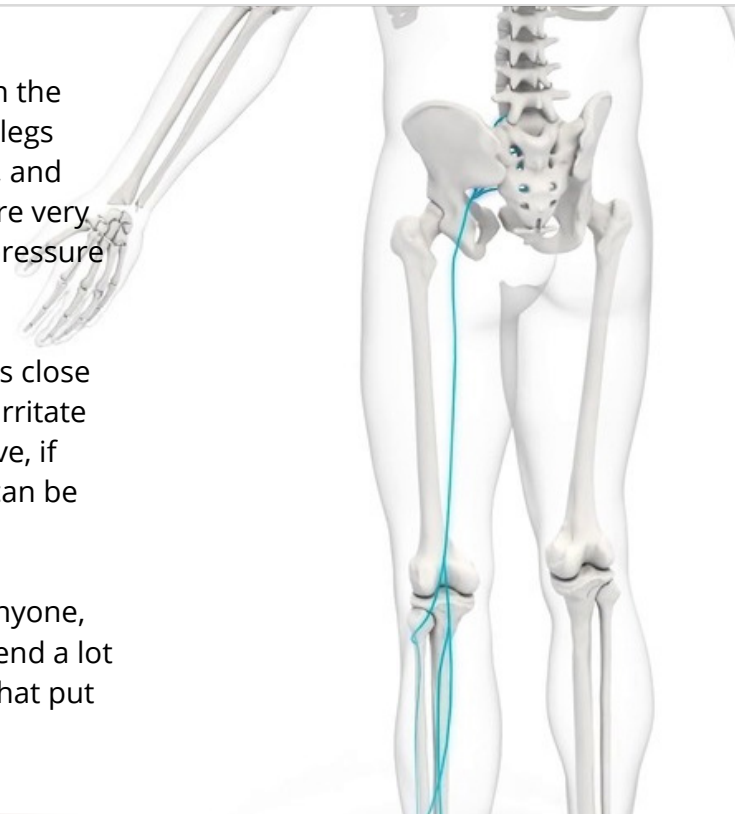
# Sciatica

Sciatica is the term often given to nerve pain travelling down the leg. Symptoms can include weakness, numbness, pins and needles, electric shock sensations, and aching. The pain can vary from infrequent and irritating, to constant and incapacitating.

As the nerves originate from the spaces between the lumbar vertebrae, they travel the length of your legs through various muscles and connective tissues, and wrap closely to your bones. Nerves, by design, are very sensitive structures. This means that if there is pressure placed on them, they become easily irritated.

As your nerves travel out of your spine, they pass close by your discs. If a disc becomes inflamed, it can irritate the nerves. Further down the length of your nerve, if your muscles or soft tissues are tight, pressure can be placed on the nerves in these areas.

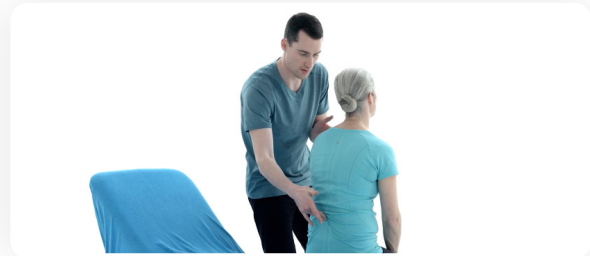
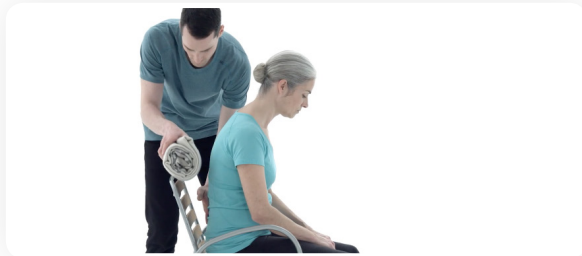
Nerve pain does not discriminate. It can affect anyone, but those more prone to experiencing it may spend a lot of time sitting, or bending and lifting: Positions that put more strain on the discs.



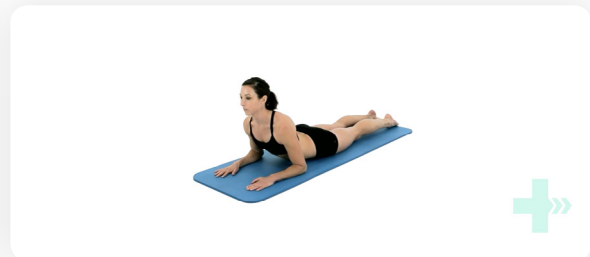
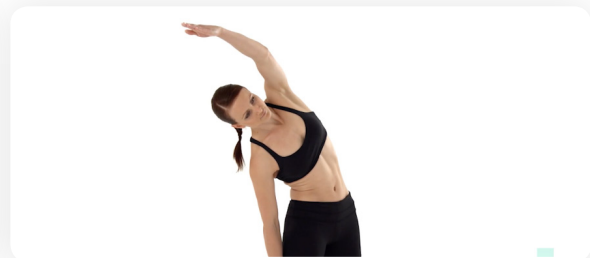
Poor flexibility in the muscles around your buttocks and legs can further increase the likelihood of irritating your nerves.

To avoid further irritating your nerve ensure you monitor your posture, and practice good manual handling techniques. Stand up regularly and stretch your back and legs. Endeavour to do these stretches before your pain increases.

Assess your work station or driving position. If there is a lot of pressure on the back of your leg, you may find yourself increasingly suffering from neural pain. When sitting, your feet should be flat on the floor with your knees slightly lower than your hips. It is often better to sit on an upright chair, rather than a low, soft sofa. Placing a rolled towel in the small of your back can help to facilitate this good sitting posture.



Perform some gentle back stretches to maintain flexibility in your spine and reduce constant pressure on your nerves and discs.



Nerve pain provoked further away from your spine by tension in the buttock, hamstrings, or calf muscles, requires regular gentle stretching to these areas.

Hold your stretches for 15 seconds or more, and aim to do them regularly throughout the day. Try and link your stretches to activities you do regularly. Some can be done whilst sitting down, others standing. During your stretches, it is vital that you do not provoke your nerve pain.

Lastly, depending on which nerve is irritated, you will likely need to perform some specific neural gliding exercises. These will be given to you by your practitioner and are often best done little and often throughout the day to avoid provoking your pain too much.