

THE BACK STORY NEWSLETTER – ISSUE 5

Injured? When to stop and when to push through the pain?



Running with Sciatica Pain

Are you running with sciatica pain? A shot of pain runs from the lower back down the leg and possibly as far as the toes? Whether chronic or a first time occurrence, sciatic pain will stop a runner in their tracks.

The term sciatica is often a blanket term used to describe back pain or a discomfort that radiates down one or both the legs. However the term actually describes a symptom, rather than the diagnosis. Sciatic pain stems from a particular cause that varies from person to person. The nerves involved are easily irritated, whether from a minor back spasm to a degenerated disc. Running with sciatica pain stems from a number of conditions. For each cause a different treatment exists.

Causes of Sciatica

- Degenerative disc disease
- Facet joint syndrome
- Piriformis Syndrome
- Back strain
- Muscle spasm
- Leg-length discrepancy

Sciatic Symptoms

The sciatic nerve extends from the bottom of the spine and into the feet, making it the longest nerve in the body. If the nerve gets pinched, pain can occur anywhere along the nerve. Discomfort may be felt on one or both sides causing bilateral sciatica.

Pain typically occurs sporadically, similar to an electric shock rather than constant. Running with sciatica pain is not typically from a traumatic incident or awkward movement but gradual with time. Pain may be exasperated while running and being active or while sitting, standing or sneezing.

Sciatica symptoms vary with moderate to severe pain. Often a patient will have initial back pain and within days or weeks the pain spreads to the leg. The back pain may diminish as the leg pain intensifies. For longstanding cases of sciatica the pain becomes more localized around the buttocks and back of the leg(s). Lying down is typically the most comfortable position.

Common Sciatica Symptoms

- Burning
- Numbness
- Tingling
- Weakness
- Radiating Pain

Treatment of Sciatica

Sciatica treatment varies with the cause, but often requires professional care. When diagnosing the pain, getting a proper evaluation is essential to treatment. A proper diagnosis from the Running Doctor will help determine the severity of the case. Sometimes stretching and exercise will alleviate the pain, while more serious treatment may be needed if the pain stems from a degenerated disc. In such cases where the disc degeneration occurs, the non-surgical and drug free IDD Therapy® protocol is the best long-term and proven option.

Sciatic pain and a hamstring pull may feel similar. Stretching the hamstrings further aggravates the sciatica. A proper analysis is needed to ensure proper treatment that will not further damage the area. A quick test can be performed at home to aid in the differentiation of the cause, although it is not a completely accurate diagnosis. Begin by lying on your back with the injured leg straight in the air. Next have someone flex the foot with the toes pointing towards the knee. If you experience a shot of pain down the leg or in the upper back, sciatica may be the culprit to blame. For a complete examination, schedule an appointment with the Running Doctor to ensure proper care.

Quick Sciatic Relief Tips

When the pain hits or when you are trying to avoid a flare-up, try a few of these actions. Although these will not cure the sciatica, they may give you temporary relief.

- Sleep on your side with a pillow in between your legs
- Practice good posture
- Strengthen the core
- Take a hot bath or visit the sauna
- Walk if it feels good

Stopping all activity may not be necessary. In most cases movement is helpful and prevents the area from becoming stiff. If the source is a muscle spasm the treatment is minimal. However if it is related to a degenerated disc, activity needs to stop and more extensive care is needed.

As with any injury, prevention is the best medicine. With any initial onset of pain, begin taking precautions. Lessen your intensity while working out. If the pain persists take time to begin treatment and stop the injury before it becomes chronic.

After the cause has been determined, preventing future occurrences should be evaluated. If the issue is improper support from shoes, custom orthotics is a good option. Get ready to run pain free.

- Dr. John Thomas, D.C. has practiced as a board-certified sports chiropractor for over a decade. Known as the Running Doctor, Dr. Thomas runs marathons.

How to Prevent a Cold

Prevent Seasonal Flu and the Common Cold with Common Sense

We all know how to prevent a cold. The prevention reports are the same every year. Wash your hands, cover your mouth and avoid close contact with the sick. Although these tactics do not completely prevent you from contracting an illness, they will greatly reduce your risk. We all read and know the facts, but often get lazy or do not put them into practice. How often do we touch our face, rub the eyes or touch our mouth without realizing it.

Whether it is the common cold, flu or H1N1 the preventative measures are similar and effective when practiced.

How to Prevent a Cold

- Avoid unclean hand contact with the mucus membrane areas (eyes, nose and mouth)
- Don't touch food without washing hands
- Regularly wash your hands
- Don't share drinks or food
- Avoid door knobs

All of these precautions are well known, yet easily slip into everyday life. The eyes, nose and mouth are covered by the mucous membranes and are an entry way for sickness into the body. How often do you rub your eyes or touch your face and nose without a second thought? Try to be conscious of your own actions or watch to see how often others do it. Another example is touching our food with unclean hands and spreading the germs onto the food and into the mouth.

We all know we are supposed to wash our hands. But do we wash them at the correct times and what do we do immediately following the action? In a bathroom we wash our hands, then turn off the water or grab the door knob putting the germs right back onto the hands. Do we do a thorough job of washing hands? Watch a doctor at your next visit and see how they scrub, getting between the fingers and thoroughly sudzing up the soap. In areas of large traffic and close quarters such as airports and malls, wash your hands once you get home or arrive at your destination. If you are near someone sneezing and sniffing wash your hands once you leave their presence.

Sharing food and drinks is tempting and easy to do. However instead of being paranoid or ignoring this advice, simply divide the food into separate containers. A good tip is to split the drink into two cups or divide the food onto two plates to prevent the spreading of germs. Practice these measures especially when the flu season is full blown as symptoms may not be present immediately or others may be carriers without showing outward signs.

Avoiding door knobs can be tricky. After the going to the bathroom and doing a through hand-wash, keep the paper towel in your hand to grab the door.

These tips are not revolutionary ideas, but do we consciously make calculated efforts to limit exposure. Are you unknowingly infecting yourself or family members? Be aware of your actions and reduce your risk of missing work or staying home with a sick child. Instill these practices within your kids as schools are a breeding ground for sniffles and coughs. Practice these habits and make them apart of the normal daily routine.

More Obvious Tips on how to Prevent a Cold

- Soak up sun rays or supplement vitamin D
- Exercise to boost the immune system
- Get enough quality sleep
- Eat right to give your body the fuel to fight and prevent infections

Enjoy the sun, but with all things moderation is key. Vitamin D helps the immune system function properly. A few minutes without sunscreen and direct exposure on large amounts of skin as in no turtle necks and pants, is very beneficial. However as fall and winter approach and sunlight hours decrease, supplementation of vitamin D may be needed. Modern day diets steer away from the vitamin D rich sources found in intensities, insects, organ meats and fat and skin from certain animals. More common food sources eaten are shellfish and oily fish.

Research continues to link moderate and consistent exercise with a strong immune system. During the activity immune cells circulate through body more rapidly and are more effective at killing bacteria and viruses. Hours after exercise the immune system will return to normal, however consistent exercisers tend to have a longer-lasting effect.

Knowing how to prevent the flu begins with rest. Sleep away the flu and avoid the sickness all together. This well known advice is often ignored. Before you skim this advice, reflect on your current schedule and how often you do or don't get adequate sleep. If your stage in life is not conducive to quality sleep, at least go to bed early when you begin to feel under the weather to help the body ward off the incoming attack. Think about the last time you were sick and did you feel the best or the least bad, in the morning and symptoms worsened into the afternoon and evening?

Eat right. As vitamin C and antioxidants are obvious, all around good nutrition is essential. The body needs proper resources from the nutrients found in food from the earth. Fortified TV dinners and bran cereals do not count. Fresh fruits and vegetables and unprocessed or minimally processed food allows the body to function optimally. With the first signs of the germ attack, you want your body to be armed and ready to go like a well oiled machine. Want to know more about what eating healthy really means or wanting to get into better eating habits? Schedule an appointment with Dr. Thomas to learn about his cleansing program and nutritional plan.

Take action and be aware of your unconscious movements if you want to know how to prevent the flu. Try to count how many times you touch your face in a day. Don't overact as over-washing is not any healthier but be proactive. Unless we contained ourselves in our own bubble, germs and sickness is inevitable but that does not mean

we are helpless. With each preventative action the chances of getting infected significantly decreases.

Learn more about Dr. Thomas' Purification Program and get your health on track and ready to defend against future germ attacks.

Stopping the Sciatica

Ninety-Year-Old Gets Back Pain Fix with No Surgery, No Shots

By Ellie White-Stevens

Being told she could not treat sciatica surgically due to her age, ninety-one year old Juanita Ridenhour finds a non surgical and drug free alternative for her pain. With three degenerated bulging discs, Ms. Ridenhour did not want to slow down her life and she opted for IDD Therapy® from Dr. Thomas' Allied Healthcare Clinic.

She was on vacation when the pain hit and the sciatica leg pain was unbearable. "I had this pain in my back and my only relief was bending over. I went to the hospital and got a shot for the pain," said Fayetteville resident Juanita Ridenhour. At ninety-one she was living a full life--living by herself, doing her own cleaning and yardwork, until the back pain.



Within a little while, the pain came back. She said, "Pain hit me again. I was screaming. I called my daughter. I called 911." At the hospital, they first thought she might be having a hip problem, with the pain radiating down her leg.

Her real cause of sciatica leg pain? Three degenerated bulging discs. Her doctors at the hospital recommended chiropractic care. She went to see both Dr. Thomas, The Running Doctor, at Allied Healthcare and an orthopedist. The orthopedist said he could operate, but there would be a lot of dangers at her age in getting that kind of surgery.

Dr. Thomas offered her a much better solution. He said, "When Juanita came in she was walking with a walker." He advised her to treat the sciatica with his method, which includes hot packs, ultrasound therapy, electrical stimulus and the Accu-SPINA™ with IDD Therapy®. IDD is a non-invasive medical procedure that has an 86% success rate in treating herniated, bulging,

degenerated discs, sciatica, and low back pain.

Eighty percent of Americans will suffer some type of back pain in their lives, and current estimates of medical care for those who have been disabled by severe back pain in the U.S. range from thirty to seventy billion dollars annually. It is the second most frequently reported reason for a doctor's visitation (14.3 million office visits per year); the fifth most frequent cause of hospitalization and the third most frequent reason for surgery.

Finding Sciatica Relief

According to Dr. Thomas, IDD is a proven medically advanced, non-surgical solution for lower back pain. "This is one of the most sophisticated approaches I have found to safely, comfortably and non-surgically treat the cause of back pain due to conditions like bulging and herniated discs, sciatica, post-surgical failures and degenerative arthritis." said Dr. Thomas. "The reported results are impressive and show that 86% of this group of people may be given relief of their pain; requiring less medication (and therefore less side effects), and permitting them to enjoy normal life activities again."

"Also, what impressed me most about this Accu-SPINA™ and IDD Therapy® protocols were the MRI images that showed that the treatment may actually re-hydrate the discs. I am not aware of any other therapy - whether physical therapy, chiropractic, invasive injections, or surgery - that provides such a high success rate and at the same time is non-surgical," added Dr. Thomas.

Juanita Ridenhour worked as a nurse for 47 years. She's practical, and knows to give credit where credit is due. "I'm back now doing everything at home. I've done so good. I've been willing to try all this, because the pain was so terrible. This is a wonderful place. They've been so kind and helpful."

What about the IDD machine--does it hurt? "He's trying to stretch the spine out. You can feel it pulling, but it doesn't hurt," said Juanita, a 2007 Fayette Woman Mother of the Year. "It feels like wearing a corset." Juanita's treatment will be done in 2 more weeks--eight weeks of treatment in full. She is thrilled that she was able to treat sciatica without any down time and she is even back to her gardening!

Besides treating all manner of back pain or a torn disc, Dr. John Thomas specializes in sports and personal injuries without the use of drugs or surgery. He teaches methods of eliminating harmful toxins from the body for the prevention of disease. In practice for over a decade, The Running Doctor, Dr. Thomas, runs marathons and follows his own good guidelines for health and nutrition.