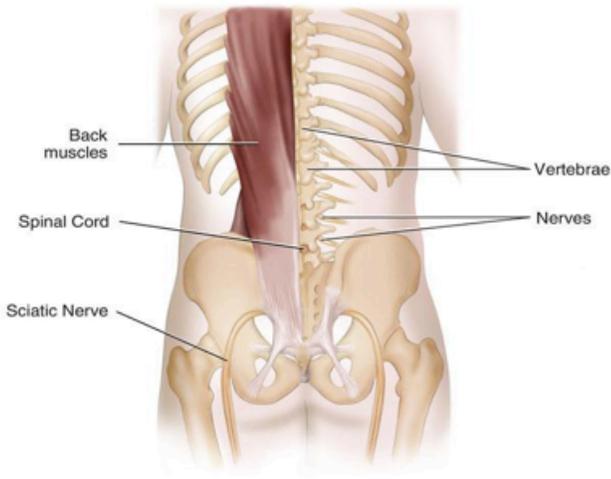




McFarland Clinic

LOW BACK PAIN



WHAT YOU MAY EXPERIENCE

- Pain in the low back, possibly radiating into the buttocks or down the leg
- A general aching in low back; may include stiffness
- Restricted range of motion
- Pain can be felt with prolonged sitting, prolonged standing or when going from sitting to standing.

POSSIBLE SOURCES

PIRIFORMIS SYNDROME: A spasm or tightness of the piriformis muscle in the buttocks that can irritate the sciatic nerve or impinge the sciatic nerve. Poor mechanics of the foot and lower extremity can cause a rotation in the pelvis causing the spasm to occur.

DISC PROBLEMS: Discs are found between each of the vertebrae of the spine from C2 to S1. Discs (the cushioning between the vertebrae) can be compressed, ruptured, herniated, develop a mild bulge or, there may be degeneration of the disc. Any of the above condition may occur from poor posture in sitting or standing. Also, with standing, walking or running, poor support of the foot can lead to mechanical changes in the back.

LEG LENGTH DISCREPANCIES: A difference in the length of the leg from the pelvis to the ankle. May be due to a fracture of the bone in the lower leg or thigh. Could also be caused by poor mechanics of the lower extremity due to lack of good support beginning at the foot.

ARTHRITIS: A degenerative condition where the joints become abnormal due to damage to the cartilage.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Poor flexibility
- Muscle imbalances
- Leg length discrepancies
- Flattened pronated feet
- Poor support of shoes you wear and/or the support inside the shoes can add to the stress on the foot and lower extremity
- Biomechanical changes in the foot can allow increases in pronation

QUICK FIX

The 3 S's- Stretching, Strengthening, and Supporting, along with ICE and REST, have been found to be the simplest and most effective for these injuries:

1. **Stretching** of the hamstring and piriformis muscle can help to decrease and eliminate many of the problems (*see back of this sheet*).
2. **Strengthening** of the muscles of the abdomen, quad and hip can assist in avoiding problems (see back of this sheet).
3. **Supporting** the foot with proper shoes and insoles can prevent or help to eliminate the vast majority of lower extremity problems due to faulty biomechanics. You may consult with your Sports Medicine Physician or Sports Medicine Physical Therapist for guidelines about this; they can guide you to an appropriate local running store.

FOLLOW-UP

If these quick fixes do not help resolve your problem, this would be the point where you would consult your medical practitioner. You could start with your Primary Care or Sports Medicine Physician. They may test your back & take x-rays or do an MRI or other tests to narrow down your diagnosis. Follow up from there could be with your Physical Therapist where a combination of manual therapy & specific exercises may help resolve your problem. If damage is significant, you may be referred to an Orthopedic Surgeon.



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