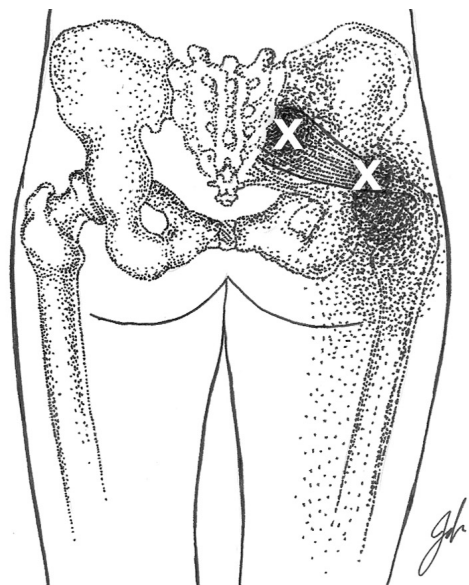


The piriformis muscle syndrome frequently is characterized by such bizarre symptoms that they may seem unrelated.

~ B. Retzlaff

Piriformis Syndrome

Piriformis syndrome is more than just a pain in the butt with symptoms ranging from lower back, hip, and thigh pain; sharp shooting pain radiating down the leg and into the foot, sexual dysfunction, and pelvic joint problems. To understand piriformis syndrome, we need to go over some basic anatomy of the involved structures. The piriformis muscle (PM) attaches from your tailbone to your hip. In non-weight bearing activities, the function of the PM is to laterally rotate the thigh during hip extension (e.g. a martial arts back kick). While walking and running, the PM stabilizes the hip by restraining too much inward rotation of the thigh. Also, the PM helps hold your leg in it's socket!



Piriformis "syndrome" is an umbrella term used to describe 3 kinds of conditions of the PM muscle:

1) Trigger Points Sudden or sustained stress to the PM causes the development of small knots called myofascial trigger points. These tender points usually refer pain into the butt, hip, and back of the upper thigh (See illustration above). The pain is increased by sitting or standing for prolonged periods, strenuous activity, and even rectal pain during bouts of constipation! (Ouch)

2) Neurovascular Entrapment The sciatic nerve travels alongside the PM, therefore, spasms and knots in the PM puts the squeeze on your sciatic nerve and other vascular structures such as arteries, which produces sciatica-like symptoms including sharp shooting pain down the back of the leg and into the feet and toes.

3) Pelvic Joint Problems An unhappy PM tugs away on your tailbone, sometimes causing imbalance in the sacroiliac joint (the articulation between your tailbone and pelvis).

Piriformis syndrome is rather complex because all three of the above conditions have a cause and effect on each other. Accordingly, it is essential for your Massage Therapist to thoroughly assess your problem to ensure the best course of treatment.

*Piriformis Syndrome
effects women more than
men at a ratio of 6 to 1.*

Cont'd on reverse side...

Piriformis Syndrome (Cont'd)

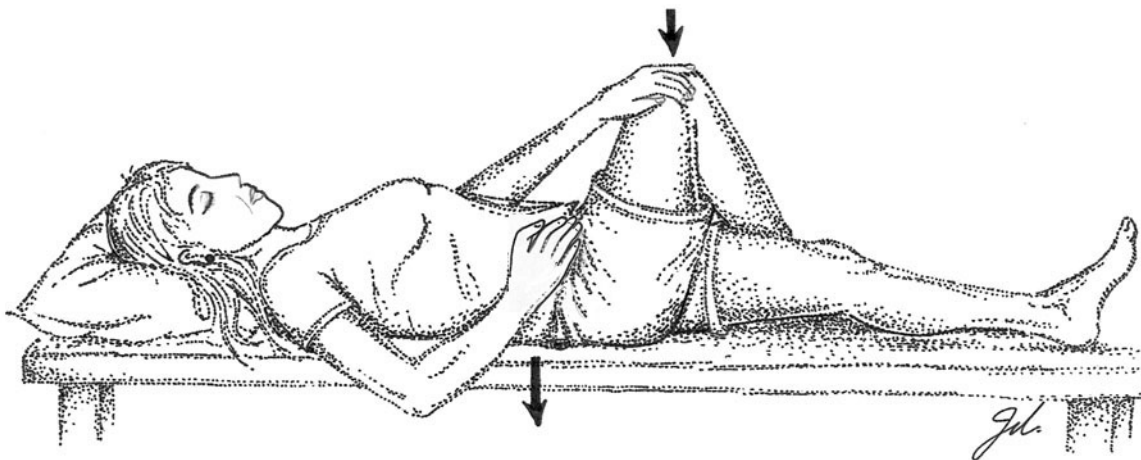
Unlike sciatica, caused by a herniated disc, the achilles tendon reflex appears normal in the case of piriformis syndrome.

Assessment of piriformis syndrome involves an in-depth interview to gather preliminary information, followed-up by a series of movement and special tests to the PM and related structures. **The frequency and duration of your massage therapy treatment plan will depend on a variety of factors, including the severity and complexity of your symptoms of the syndrome.**

The treatment includes general work to the back with a deeper focus on the lower back, compressions to the muscles of the buttocks (starting on the unaffected side), stretching and hydrotherapy applications of heat or cold where deemed appropriate by your Massage Therapist.

Corrective actions to prevent piriformis syndrome include the following:

- * maintain a comfortable sleep position
- * when sitting for long periods, use a rocking chair to stay in motion or change your sitting position frequently
- * take periodic breaks during long drives in the car to stretch
- * remember to properly warm-up the body prior to engaging in vigorous activities or sports.



Here's the best way to **self-stretch** your piriformis muscle. To stretch the right PM, lie down on your back, cross your right leg over your left and stabilize the right hip with your right hand. Grasp your right knee with your left hand and gently pull your right knee to the left and down. Breathe naturally and hold the stretch for at least 30 seconds.

For appointment bookings or more information, please call: (905) 897-8889