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Sciatica... the 3 guarantees

Sciatica ... you know the pain that travels down your leg and stops you enjoying so many activities. The back pain which has suddenly increased so your life is now not so easy. Did you know there are 3 guarantees that go with *sciatica*?

 Sciatica... the 3 guarantees

??? First do check with your healthcare professional to make sure it is safe for you to do gardening activities and if there is anything you should absolutely avoid doing.

Piriformis syndrome, also known as "pseudo-sciatica" (meaning "false sciatica"), is actually referral pain and other symptoms (tingling, numbness, etc.) caused by tightness and knots of contraction in the piriformis muscle, which runs from the upper femur bone to the edge of the sacrum, the triangular pelvic bone that is below the lumbar spine. The symptoms of piriformis syndrome are very similar and may be indistinguishable from true sciatica.

??? When gardening with back pain issues warm up first. Do any back pain exercises you have been following, go for a short walk and treat it like you are getting ready for some real physical activity ...which you are. If it helps you use a heat pad while you are gardening to keep the muscles in your back warm and less prone to injury. After gardening do your stretches again and get into a warm bath or shower as soon as you can.

??? Let someone know you are in the garden working. If you do overstrain your back you will want the comfort of knowing someone will be checking on you from time to time if necessary.

And the final guarantee... Sciatica Guarantee #3 The best help is self help! What does this mean? As statistics show, the majority of cases (in fact over 96%) sciatica is a minor structural issue. The trauma that starts your back pain is not severe enough to create it. Your *sciatica* and back pain is due to a build of tension over weeks, months or years.

So sciatica guarantee #1 is... if it is severe, affecting your muscle strength, changing your bowel or bladder control seek help immediately. Or I can guarantee your sciatica will get worse and you wish you had sought help.

Target these three areas and your *sciatica* will disappear. Best of all it won't return in the future. Fail to target all of these areas and you are doomed to have ongoing *sciatica*. Whether it stays with you at a low level, or disappears and then returns again at some later date. Either way, unless you remove the 3 main causes of *sciatica*, it will return.

??? Always think what you CAN DO not what you can't do. Just because you have back pain and pinched sciatic nerve symptoms you do not need to give up your garden. Work out a way you and your back can enjoy it together...

If it repeats it usually comes back worse. So it is best to fix it properly the first time to save your self time, money and pain. The second guarantee is simple... fix the entire problem first time. So what do you need to fix?

Releasing muscle tension is simple enough if you know how to stretch, what to stretch and when to stretch... the 3 essential ingredients for any stretching routine. Building muscle strength also is simple. You don't need to spend hours in a gym, all you need to know is how to stimulate the nerve and blood supply to your muscles which gives them the strength they need to support your joints. Exercise just means you can lift more heavy objects.

??? Consider a series of raised beds with paths in between so you can move easily between them to tend your plants without too much bending or overreaching your back. Don't make the beds too wide as you need to comfortably reach them.

If you love your garden as much as I do and you have backache, pinched sciatic nerve symptoms, sciatica or one of the many back pain issues you may be wondering if you can ever garden again. Gardening can be hard on the back and I thought I would have to give it up forever. However I discovered that is not necessarily the case...

Two simple maneuvers will distinguish sciatica from piriformis syndrome in the majority of cases (when the problem is one versus the other and not both conditions at the same time). First, in a seated position, if one straightens the leg on the painful side (so that the leg is parallel to the floor), and the sciatica symptoms increase, this is usually a sign of true sciatic nerve irritation.

It is important to distinguish between *sciatica* and piriformis syndrome, because the treatment for the conditions varies, and getting the diagnosis right typically leads to more effective treatment.

??? It is vital if you have back pain and pinched sciatic nerve symptoms that you try to get to the root cause of your pain and treat that along with the symptoms to get lasting relief. Learn as much as you can and ask lots of questions. Feel free to visit my website at www.mypetback.com for back pain solutions, information, suggestions and inspiration. Never give up looking for your solution.

Sciatica comes with 3 guarantees; fail to notice these and your sciatica may stay with you for a long time. Learn to get rid of your sciatica once and for all!

About the Author: Jasmine Ann is a recovering back pain sufferer and author of: www.mypetback.com <http://lifewithmypetback.blogspot.com> <http://www.squidoo.com/backpainreliefwithouttears/>

Many back pain and sciatica sufferers are forced to use these drugs long term, previously myself included, as most back complaints are not easily or quickly resolved. This long term use of NSAID's can have lasting effects on your health. Problems with kidneys, the liver, the intestines and the stomach lining itself are not uncommon and of course add to this the noticeable side effects like cramping, headaches and drowsiness just to mention a few.

Heat and Cold Packs - many people report gaining relief through the use of heat and cold packs particularly where the problem lies with increased muscle tension. Alternating between both hot and cold packs on the affected area has also been reported as a good pain reliever. The hot pack promotes blood flow and can release tensed up muscles and the cold pack helps in reducing the amount of inflammation so you are getting the best of both worlds when alternating between the two.

Give your body a break! For more information on the best all natural pain relievers and anti-inflammatories please head on over to <http://back-pain-products.org> and check out the all natural Heal N Soothe. Your body will thank you for it!

??? Gardening is a very physical activity but there are lots of things you can do to make it easier. Even if you really cannot do the physical work you can still take a very active part in your garden. Also gardening is a great motivator. If you want to do your garden and you are dealing with back aches and pains you are much more likely to keep up with any back pain exercises and be diligent about looking after your back.

It is just one day you extend your self too far and then your sciatica pain arrives. The pain is due to the combination of muscle tension, muscle weakness and joint disruption. The cure is simple...

For more information on Sciatica issues just visit [Sciatica](http://www.back-pain-advisor.com/sciatica.html) - <http://www.back-pain-advisor.com/sciatica.html>

For expert advice, tips and techniques to eliminate back pain visit <http://www.back-pain-advisor.com/back-pain-advice.html>

Accurate Diagnosis of your condition - The first thing is to get an accurate diagnosis of why you are in pain. Often times sciatica is caused by muscle tension or imbalances which can directly affect the discs and vertebrae in your back which results in a irritated sciatic nerve. Other 'structural' problems with your spine can also cause this irritation and that is why an accurate diagnosis is essential for finding the best treatment.

If you have ever suffered from Sciatica or Sciatic Nerve problems you will know how uncomfortable and painful this condition can be. Sitting to eat dinner, driving the car, even sleeping can be greatly affected by sciatic pain and unlike many other joint or muscle problems it is simply not possible to isolate and immobilize the affected area until your body has had a chance to heal itself but if you follow these couple of tips you will have the best chance at keeping your sanity!

Sciatica refers to irritation of the sciatic (often mis-spelled as syatic or psyatic) nerve, that arises from nerve roots in the lumbar spine. The most common cause of sciatic nerve irritation, or "true" sciatica is compression of one or more of its component nerve roots due to disc herniation or spinal degeneration in the lower lumbar region. Sciatica usually begins in the buttock area and, depending on the severity of the underlying nerve compression and inflammation, may extend down the entire leg to the ankle and foot.

As mentioned earlier, the symptoms of true sciatica are very similar to piriformis syndrome. Both cause pain, tingling, burning, "electrical shock" sensations, and/or numbness down the leg, often all the way to the foot. In addition, both sciatica and piriformis syndrome tend to be at least partially related to biomechanical functional problems in the joints of the back and pelvis and they may even be present simultaneously in the same person, so it can be difficult to tell them apart.

In some cases, piriformis syndrome may cause true sciatic nerve irritation, as the sciatic nerve may run underneath or even through the middle of the piriformis, so contraction of the piriformis may produce sufficient compression of the sciatic nerve to produce actual nerve symptoms. This is one of the main sources of confusion when it comes to distinguishing true *sciatica* from piriformis syndrome.

??? When you first get back pain your garden can suffer as you deal with the initial pain. If your garden has done its own thing for a while you need to take it in hand. If family or friends cannot help, consider getting a company in to do the hard graft for you then you can concentrate on doing the finishing touches. If you share a garden or have an allotment consider asking if people would swap tasks with you so you do more of some things for them and they do more of say digging for you, it's worth a try!

Sciatica Guarantee #2 The second guarantee is also a warning. Unless you address all the factors that create your *sciatica*... it will return. The problem with mist back pain issues is this.

Sciatica is usually not severe; it is usually caused by minor joint and muscle distortion patterns that are easily fixed. On the rare occasions it is caused by disc problems. These need addressing by trained professionals and you will need treatment or at worse surgery.

But since the most effective treatment for the two conditions varies significantly, it is important to determine the correct diagnosis if at all possible. In most cases there is an easy way to distinguish between sciatica and piriformis syndrome.

??? Scented plants are fantastic in raised beds for everyone to enjoy. You can even grow great vegetables in large raised beds and have more control over the environment and soil. Raised beds at waist height mean little or no bending for a bad back. If you have a small lawn, consider gravelling it or using chamomile or other lawn plants.

??? Consider some of the many tools you can buy to help you if you have general backache, pinched sciatic nerve symptoms, upper or lower back pain. A small investment in some good quality tools will ease strain on your back and mean you can be independent in your gardening

??? What a pain it is when you just want that big pot moving a couple of yards. Do wait until you can get someone else to do it. It is not worth aggravating your recovery from back pain for the sake of a little patience.

??? Look at your garden with a critical eye from your "bad backs" perspective and if necessary consider a redesign. This is something everyone can do and many gardeners do anyway once in a while. If you have persistent backache, back pain or disc problems you just need to take a few more things into account. You know your back like no one else does. Evaluate what jobs you find difficult and will hurt you and which are fine for you. Listen to your body and let that be your guide.

Dr Graeme Teague is an expert in the structural field, and has been in practice since 1991. His newly launched web site The Back Pain Advisor - <http://www.back-pain-advisor.com> - strives to give you valuable and expert advice, tips and information on your back pain issues.

The second maneuver is done in two parts. First, from the sitting position one bends the leg and pulls the knee on the painful side towards the same-side shoulder. In all but the most severe cases, there is usually no major increase in pain in this position. The second part of the maneuver is to pull the knee toward the opposite side shoulder. An increase in the *sciatica*-like symptoms is a strong indication of piriformis syndrome.

You need to learn ways you can ease the muscle tension, strengthen the weakened muscles and restore balance to your joints. The best news of all is that this can be achieved by using techniques your self, at home. This saves you seeing a practitioner, which also saves you time, money and pain. As you can treat your self as often as you wish at home. You are not limited by clinic hours, consultation charges or transport issues.

Sciatica Guarantee #1 The first guarantee is more of a warning. If your pain has referred to your leg, down to your foot and is affecting the strength of your leg... You need help!!

If you understand these guarantees then you can be finally free from your sciatica and can enjoy life once again. Now, I know you asking, what are the 3 sciatica guarantees?

Sciatica is caused by pelvic distortion, lower back joint mobility, muscle tension and muscle weakness in the area. Sounds complex but in reality it isn't. Getting your joints in balance and moving freely is not just in the domain of seeing a professional. You can actually do this your self.

??? If the physical work is really too much for your bad back at this stage you can do all the design, planning, ordering and task list. Teach others how to do what you know so they too can grow from the experience and learn to love gardening. Visit gardening forums and pass on your knowledge. For the year I could not do any gardening due to my low back pain and sciatica symptoms I taught my husband, following him round every inch and he went from being not at all interested to now loving it. Now I just need to get my garden back!

Physiotherapy - this is something that I have not had any success with in dealing with my *sciatica*, however combined with the right exercises and assuming that your condition is suitable to be treated this way there is no reason not to give it a go. Many doctors see physiotherapy as the first step to easing the problem and once again the blood flow in and around the muscles and loosening of joints may be beneficial to you.

Anti Inflammatory/Pain Relieving Medication - No doubt one of the most important steps to easing your sciatic pain is to reduce any inflammation of the offending area and of course to limit your pain so you can get on with life. Unfortunately this is where the use of NSAID's or non-steroidal anti inflammatory drugs is the road most doctors take. Sure, they may ease your pain and reduce inflammation but if you had any idea of the unwanted effects these drugs can have on you I'm sure you would think twice.

About the Author:

Dr. George Best is in private practice in San Antonio, Texas. For more information, check out Dr. Best's free e-book and online video course to assist in understanding and treating sciatica and piriformis syndrome, including in-depth instruction on *sciatica* exercises at <http://www.SciaticaSelfCare.com> .

So how do we protect ourselves against these problems while still getting the pain relief and reduced inflammation that we need? The answer is natural medicines that do the same job without jeopardizing our future health. There are many great all natural products on the market these days and for peace of mind there really is no other choice.

??? Consider a low maintenance garden. Plant so that there are no bare patches of earth where the weeds can grow. Less weeding equals less bending and less backache. Go for low maintenance plants and shrubs. Concentrate plants needing more attention in one area and consider a raised bed for them so less stooping for your back. Place the area nearer to your house or your garden shed. Your tools will be closer to hand that way.

A large amount of confusion and misunderstanding exists concerning the conditions sciatica and piriformis syndrome. There are some who insist that the two conditions are actually the same thing, but even though they can have symptoms that are very much alike, the underlying causes differ.

??? Frustrating as it is, do a little, rest then do a little more. I used to be an all day gardener but now I respect my back and listen to any little aches and pains and stop before it needs to shout at me! Vary the activity so you don't do repetitive tasks which put a strain on your lower or upper back. So mix it up with a little weeding, trimming, pruning etc.

She provides information, inspiration, back pain solutions and hints and tips on dealing with back issues in everyday life, to help people with back problems and shares her own back pain story.

Tracy B. Wheeler

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