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## Sciatica Exercises - the Good and the Bad

*Sciatica* exercises are an important part of both short and long-term treatment, but it is critical to choose the right exercises. Even commonly-recommended exercises for sciatica may not be indicated during times of severe acute symptoms, and some exercises may only make things worse.

However there are ways of treating sciatica without a person having to resort to using medications that their doctor prescribes or which can be brought over the counter at your local drug store. In this article I will be looking at some *sciatica* home treatment methods that you may want to consider.

During the acute phase of sciatica pain, McKenzie exercises provide one of the best and safest treatment approaches available - more effective than medication and epidural steroid injections in many people. Though often associated with spinal extension and mistakenly called the "McKenzie Extension Exercises", McKenzie method may involve any number of spinal positions/movements. The whole point of the McKenzie method is to evaluate different positions/exercises to find what best produces "centralization" of symptoms.

A position or exercise that results in symptom centralization is one that will be beneficial, even in situations where symptoms increase for a time in areas closer to the spine. For example, if you had sciatica and low back pain and tried one of the McKenzie exercises and the sciatica completely went away but the back pain got worse, the exercise would still be considered beneficial and it would be recommended to continue using it. In the long run, a *sciatica* exercise that produces centralization will usually eventually result in improvement in all symptoms, even if more central (closer to the spine) symptoms get worse at first.

The sciatica stretches and information I want to share with you are great. The best one you can do is lying on your back and pulling your knees up to your chest. The point of this is to stretch out the lower back and should take the pressure off the nerves. Another stretch is grabbing onto something above your head and allowing your legs to go weak. This forces the back to stretch out and takes a lot of tension off of it.

Plus eating raw garlic or taking a garlic supplement with other kinds of supplements can also help to relief the aches and pains as well as improve circulation around the body.

Potato and celery juice when combined together are said to provide relief from the pain of *sciatica*. But in order for them to be truly effective a person should be looking to drink at least 10 ounces each day. However if the thought of drinking just potato and celery juice on their own leaves you with a feeling of dread, then why not add some carrot and beetroot juice to the mixture as well. These two juices not only help to fortify the mixture but also make it taste more pleasant as well. If however you are unable to drink this type of juice on a daily basis then you could drink celery tea throughout the day instead.

Sciatica is a condition rather than a disease which has been caused by other conditions which are affecting the health of a person. There are three primary causes for a person to suffer from *sciatica* namely a herniated disc, piriformis syndrome or spinal stenosis.

Ayurveda believes that Sciatica/Gridhrasi is caused by the aggravation of vayu. Sometimes the vitiation of kapha along with vata brings on the attack. At times constipation precipitates or aggravates an attack of sciatica. Ayurveda prescribes the perfect prescription for Gridhrasi. It includes:

Majority of these patients give a history of lifting heavy weights on their head or back, adopting improper spinal postures while sitting or bending forward, riding two wheelers on bumpy roads, female patients standing for a longer time in kitchens - these all contribute to the unbearable & excruciating pain called Sciatica.

The simplest of the McKenzie exercises for alleviating sciatica is done by simply lying on one's stomach on the floor or a firm surface and propping one's chest up on the elbows. This places the lower spine in a gentle extension, which can help relieve *sciatica* by pushing bulging spinal discs forward, and away from the nerve roots that form the sciatic nerve, reducing pressure and irritation. Although you can maintain this position for relatively long periods of time, I recommend doing it for short periods of one or two minutes with a rest break of at least a few minutes in between. The frequent breaks prevent the low back muscles from tightening up as much, and yet still allows for good overall results. For more complex *sciatica* exercises, getting detailed instructions either through an illustrated guide or an experienced health care practitioner is advised.

I wanted to take the time to share with you a few sciatica stretches and information that you can use to help you. *Sciatica* is actually a symptom of back pain, but often people will refer directly to the symptom. Back pain is a nightmare for those people that have it. It affects everything you do because your back is central in that movement. You can roll over in bed and be caught with sharp pain. You could lean into the refrigerator to grab something and you'll have sharp pains go up your spine. It's really a horrible thing to have to live with. I'm going to talk to you about *sciatica* stretches and information.

Dietary Regimen: Pulses, beans, and fried foods should be prohibited. Curds and other sour substances should be avoided. Saffron, in small quantities, should be mixed with milk and given to the patient to drink. Life style Regimen: Gentle exercise of the leg is advised. Exposure to damp and cold should be avoided. Swimming in warm water is a good exercise for legs. The patient should use a hard bed and wear a lumbo-sacral belt. Yogic exercises like Halasana, Shalabhasana, and Bhujangasana may be undertaken after pain has subsided to prevent recurrence of *sciatica*. Internal Medications: include many types of Ayurvedic preparations like Thailams, Grithams, Gutika, Pills, Lehyams, Churnams, Asavaaristams & Kashayas are prescribed by a qualified Doctor after a thorough examination of the patient.

Another juice you may want to consider drinking instead of the above is that made from elderberries. Not only can you drink it in a juice format you could also drink it as a tea. This particular food contains properties which help to relax and stimulate the muscles and so can be beneficial in treating the symptoms associated with *sciatica*.

External Therapies: includes the famous Panchakarma & Rejuvenation therapies. Abhyangam, Nadi Swedam, Elakizhi, Pizhichil, Kati vasthi, Matra vasthi and other Ayurvedic procedures are performed accordingly for a period of 7/14/21/28 days thus treating the underlying cause of the disease without any side effects.

For example, while commonly recommended to people with *sciatica*, exercises such as hamstring stretches and the yoga position, "downward facing dog" can be beneficial as part of managing one's condition once the pain is reduced, these exercises can place tension on the sciatic nerve and aggravate an already inflamed and sensitive condition. In general, any exercise that causes pain to increase in the leg and/or extend further down the leg should be completely avoided during the acute phase of sciatica.

McKenzie practitioners use the word "centralization" when the pain and other symptoms are relieved in the areas the greatest distance away from the spine. To give an example, in a person with *sciatica* all the way down the leg to the foot, centralization might occur in which the pain left the foot and lower leg and then only extended down to the knee. Or, if sciatica symptoms started out going as far as the knee, centralization would be if the symptoms left the thigh and only went as far as the hip area.

A lot of people don't understand what is happening, but it's really quite simple. There is some sort of nerve being pinched in some manner. This could be happening from a spinal disc compressing too far and a nerve gets pinched. It can also happen from a tight back muscle that literally strains a nerve to the point of pain. Essentially some nerve, for whatever reason, is getting too much pressure on it and you end up with *sciatica*.

**SCIATICA**, Gridhrasi in Ayurveda, is a Vata roga, characterized by Sharp Shocking pain radiating from the Hip unto Thigh, Calf or the Toes in one or both the Legs. Numbness, Weakness, Tingling sensation & Discomfort along the path of the Sciatic Nerve are the results of Compression, Irritation & Inflammation of the Sciatic Nerve.

Also as well as using the kind of *sciatica* home treatment methods provided above a person who suffers from *sciatica* should be looking to improve their health overall. In order to do this they must ensure that their diet is good and that they start carrying out some form of exercise as well. Ricky is the owner of <http://www.reliefbackpain.net>. Visit his site today for more information on the best back pain relief products.

You can also take Vitamin B1 or B Complex supplement with this in order to be able to reap the full benefits that garlic can provide in helping to treat sciatica symptoms. The reason why garlic seems to be effective as a sciatica home treatment is that it contains anti oxidant properties and also helps to provide the body with warmth and energy.

About the Author:

Dr. George Best has been treating sciatica patients for over 15 years. For a free e-book on *sciatica* exercises and to access his informational online video series on *sciatica* and the treatment options for it, visit his website on *sciatica* self care.

"We are aimed at Redefining Ayurveda by propagating the ancient traditions of Ayurveda to the modern world, and practicing the Genuine, Shastroktha & Purest form of AYURVEDA from the past 9 years. Today, we are known for conceptualising ayurvedic cures to diseases like sciatica, slip disc, arthritis, spondylitis, herniated disc, degenerative disc etc. which never had a solution other than surgery. For my work in the field of ayurveda I was awarded KRRUSHI RATNA AWARD, AYURVEDA TAPASWI AWARD, VAIDYA RATNA AWARD." Says Dr. Kranthi Vardhan Chief Physician & Managing Director, The Kerala Ayurvedic Care, 3-6-101/1, st no: 19, basheerbagh, Hyderabad-29. For details contact Cell: 98666 66055, 92461 66636 & 66101140 on all days from 8am to 8pm strictly with a prior appointment.

The most common causes are Lumbar herniated disc, Lumbar Spinal Stenosis, Degenerative disc disease, Aging, Osteoporosis, Spondylitis, Pelvic Infections, Tumors, Diabetic neuropathies etc.

In the later & complicated stages of Sciatica, the gait of the affected person resembles that of an Eagle's walk & the inflamed nerve appears like Eagle's beak, hence the term Gridhrasi.

Learn the Sciatica Stretches That Work

Tracy B. Wheeler

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