

THE ROAD TO HEALTH & WELLNESS



News and advice
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ELITE
PERSONAL TRAINING
AND FITNESS
SOLUTIONS

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Sitting disease and sciatic pain

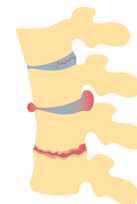
Sitting has a profound impact on the muscles and spine. Approximately ten percent of the population ages 25-45 report sciatica, one of the most painful risks of prolonged sitting. This article explains how sitting too much may cause or aggravate this all-too-common condition.



What is sciatica?

The sciatic nerve, the largest nerve in your body, starts in your lower back. It splits near your hips and extends down both of your legs, all the way to the bottoms of your feet.

Sciatica is a chronic condition involving lower back pain that may radiate down the back of the leg. Its causes include pinched nerves, narrowing of the spine, bone spurs, herniated discs and prolonged sitting. Sciatica can be incredibly painful. The most common cause is a herniated disc. Your discs are jelly-like cushions located between the bones in your back.



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SCAN ME

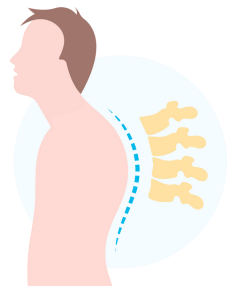
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When we sit, all our upper body weight rests on our lower back. Prolonged sitting increases pressure on these discs, causing them to lose their cushioning. Over time, a disc can bulge or even break, causing pressure on and irritation of the sciatic nerve.



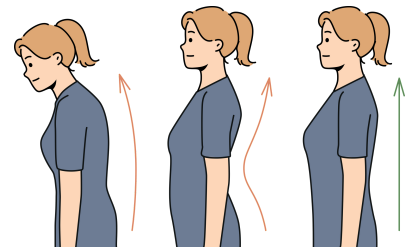
Sciatica can affect anyone at any age. It occurs when your sciatic nerve is compressed, causing symptoms like radiating pain through your lower back, hips, buttocks, and legs. When you're standing or lying down, your sciatic nerve pathway is straight, which reduces the likelihood of it being compressed. However, sitting changes your position and can therefore make sciatica worse.

When you sit, your body weight puts increased pressure on your sciatic nerve below your hips. The longer you sit, the more pressure is placed on your nerves and the vertebrae in your lower spine, and the more likely it is that you will experience worsening sciatica. Along with prolonged sitting, other factors like poor posture and weak core muscles can exacerbate your sciatica symptoms.



Why is good posture so important?

Having poor posture may lead to aches and pains, but having it over the long term can cause real damage. For every inch you tilt forward the amount of weight placed on your spine nearly doubles. Sitting in a slouched position can overstretch the spinal ligaments and strain the spinal discs. Make sure your backside is pushed back against your chair to ensure proper sitting. Keep your computer screen at eye level.



What can I do to avoid sciatica?

Switch your sitting position every 20 to 30 minutes. This avoids putting pressure on the same parts of your spine for too long. Also, every 30 minutes get up, walk around, and do some stretching. Set a timer if you must, but do it.

You can also use a small pillow or rolled-up towel to support your lower back while sitting to minimize the likelihood of disc shifts. Sitting on couches and chairs that are too soft can also contribute to sciatica pain. Without the proper support, you're more likely to slouch and pull on your spine in unhealthy ways. So, while it may be counterintuitive, firmer couches and chairs are better.



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Finally, stay hydrated. This helps keep your spinal discs lubricated, which in turn absorbs your weight and helps avoid too much spinal compression.



Key takeaways

- If you have pre-existing back problems, sitting for long periods will worsen your symptoms.
- Prevention is always the best course of action.
- Lower back pain is likely to get worse as we age, but there are things you can do to protect and strengthen your back.
- Let EPT help you counter the harmful effects of sitting disease. We offer individually tailored postural analysis and corrective exercises. Please consult with us if you have been diagnosed with sciatica or other back issues stemming from prolonged sitting.

References

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Levine, J. A. (2015). What are the risks of sitting too much? Mayo Clinic. Retrieved from http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult_health/expert-answers/sitting/faq-20058005

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Did You Know...

Have you heard of this Tik Tok tip? Mixing balsamic vinegar with flavored sparkling water to make a healthier, lower calorie alternative to Coke is a current TikTok trend with over 6.3 million views. Both sparkling water and balsamic vinegar are acidic. If you drink acidic beverages regularly, they can contribute to tooth erosion, the wearing away of the enamel that protects your teeth. This condition is permanent and causes the teeth to appear discolored. So, if you've heard of this trend, give it a pass!



Research Shows

In a very large study with over 449,500 participants, researchers found that drinking 2 to 3 cups of coffee a day is linked with a longer lifespan and a lower risk for heart disease. It did not appear to matter if the people in the study drank ground, instant or decaffeinated coffee. In the case of arrhythmias, decaf coffee was not protective, but ground and instant did reduce the risk of atrial fibrillation.

Since coffee contains more than 100 biologically active components, it is not surprising that decaf was protective as well as the caffeinated version. These findings support coffee drinking, in moderate amounts, as a heart-healthy behavior.



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Food For Thought: Private Label & Ecommerce

What is a private label brand?

Private label refers to “store” or “no-name” brands. In private labeling, retailers work with manufacturers to make their own version of familiar products. They do not rely on marketing or fancy packaging. Are they bad? No. Typically they are the same as name brands and are generally made by the same manufacturers.



Why are private labels popular?

- As inflation continues to rise, price is becoming more important than brand name for many consumers. In recent months, the number of consumers who say price is more important than brand name has grown across all income levels.
- Consumers have shifted to view private labels as offering better value for their money.
- Some private label brands are growing trust with consumers. For example, Whole Foods and Trader Joe's private label products have higher standards than many name brands. However, if it's processed food, it is ALWAYS bad.



How does Ecommerce private labeling work?

The lure of easy money spurs many entrepreneurs to create private label products through websites. There are websites to facilitate bulk ordering of commodities and supplements. You can order inventory, do your own branding and connect to your own website to sell. No need to store, package, ship or physically manage anything on your own. With small brands, a product development company or supplier is hired to facilitate the process. This is especially common with celebrity-owned products.



With the evolution of online shopping, private labels should be heavily scrutinized. As with anything on the internet, information can be misleading. The problem with these online products is you have no idea who is selling them or the quality of the products. Nor does the seller. The products tend to look just like other products with seemingly legitimate websites. They usually flood social media with advertisements.



When it comes to nutrition and supplements, EPT has the expertise to research and advise on products that are safe, sound and scientific. Give us a call. We are available for consultation.

Food for Thought column contributed by Lynette Jernigan B.S., ASCS, CFS, NASM-CPT & BCS, CFNP, CIMHP

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