
Hip Pain

Introduction

The purpose of this leaflet is to provide you with some general advice about how to manage your hip pain and some exercises to help you achieve this.

Hip pain

Hip pain is very common and usually affects the muscles and other soft tissue structures around the hip or groin area. Most hip pain is not serious and does not require a scan or x-ray to diagnose the problem in a most cases the symptoms will generally improve over time.

The pain can often be felt on the outside or front of the thigh, the groin area, the knee, the buttock and lower back.



The hip joint

The hip joint is a ball and socket joint which sits deep within the body where the top of the thigh bone (femoral head) rotates inside the hip socket (Acetabulum).

There are various structures that help to support the hip joint enabling it to move normally. The role of the hip is to support the body when standing still, running or walking.

There is a thick layer of cartilage, which provides a smooth weight bearing surface, both on the femoral head and within the acetabulum itself, this gives support and shock absorption for the hip.

A set of gluteal muscles in the buttock, which are powerful movers of the hip joint, provide support and stability during movement.

On the outside of the hip there is a bursa (fluid filled sac) which provides a cushion for tendons to move over the bony prominence called the Greater Trochanter.

Common causes of hip pain

Stiff Hip

The symptoms of a stiff hip are typically felt in the groin and may be referred to the front of the thigh and knee or buttock. Often felt as a dull ache, as well sharp pain on movement. Stiffness of the hip, typically felt when putting socks and shoes on or getting in and out of a car may be noticed.

These symptoms can be managed with a range of options, which allow you to keep active whilst minimizing your symptoms. These include; pain medication (see GP or

pharmacist for best advice), weight loss if you are overweight, strengthening and mobility exercises, supportive footwear and walking aids.

Pain felt outside of the hip

The symptoms are commonly felt on the outside of the hip. Pain is generally aggravated by activities such as running, climbing stairs, lying on the painful side in bed, sitting with legs crossed. Often painful to the touch.

This condition most commonly affects middle aged women. It can often be caused by weak muscles around the hip joint, an increase or change in activity, following a trauma for example, a fall or direct blow to the side of your hip, wider pelvis or flat feet.

General Advice

To improve symptoms in the short term, you can try the following:

- Decrease aggravating activities such as running or excessive walking.
- When standing, ensure your weight is evenly distributed through both feet (avoid leaning your weight onto one hip)
- Do not cross your legs when sitting and avoid sleeping on the painful side.
- Weight loss - Being overweight or obese increases stress on your joints.



- Try placing a pillow between your knees to avoid the painful side dragging, when lying down/sleeping.

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General Hip Exercises

Try to exercise about 3 times a day. Be guided by your pain. Stop these exercises if you feel they are making your symptoms worse or bringing on new pain.



Hip pendular exercise

Stand on your good leg on the edge of a step.

Let your painful leg swing forwards and back. Hold a stable surface for balance if needed. (eg hand rail)

20-30 secs 3 reps twice daily

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Abduction in standing

Standing on your good leg holding onto a chair or bench gently raise your bad leg sideways.

Hold for 2 seconds and slowly return to standing position.

3 sets of 10 repetitions



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Bridging

Lying on your back push your bottom into the air. Hold for 2 seconds and slowly return to

lying position. 3 sets of 10 repetitions



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Sit to Stand

From a sitting position slowly stand up with arms folded across your chest.

Slowly return to sitting position.

If this is too difficult you can push up from chair then fold arms. 3 sets of 10 repetitions

You may feel some mild discomfort during these exercises but if you feel a significant increase in pain then stop doing that particular exercise (or adjust it) until you can seek advice from your physiotherapist.

For further information

The NHS website also provides trusted online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare to help you manage your condition and/or inform your choices about your health: www.nhs.uk.

Further Information

Some useful websites to look at:

[All about hip problems - NHS TIMS](#)

[Versus Arthritis osteoarthritis of the hip information booklet](#)

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