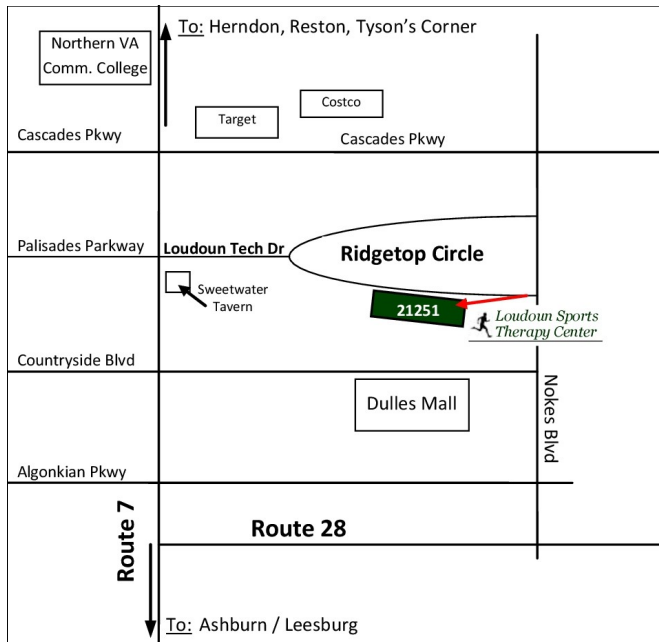


Loudoun Sports Therapy Center™

21251 Ridgetop Circle, Sterling, VA 20166



Conveniently located in Sterling, VA near the Dulles mall, route 7, and route 28.

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The Top 10 Most Burning Questions About Lower Back Pain and Sciatica



Whether this is your first bout of lower back pain or you've been suffering for years, we work to answer your questions here.



At Loudoun Sports Therapy Center, we are specialists in treating all orthopedic conditions and injuries.

Our mission is to provide excellent patient care to all patients regardless of insurance and to ensure that our patients meet their personal goals.

Our main focus is on you, the patient, and the goals you need to achieve to return to active, pain-free living. We will work with you to help you manage your pain and other symptoms as well as provide you with a progressive home exercise program so you have techniques that you can use at home to continue to progress. Lastly, we ensure that all patients are educated on their condition and given ways to prevent it from occurring again in the future.

Our team consists of Physical Therapists, Physical Therapists Assistants and Athletic Trainers so you receive the highest level of expertise, care and patient education throughout your entire time with us.

While patient care is our main focus, we also believe it is very important to give back to the community. Throughout the year we hold workshops to educate our patients and the community on ways they can improve their health and overall quality of life. We also support several organizations in Loudoun County such as Irene's Prom Closet, Toys for Tots and local food banks. It's very important to our mission as a local business to help those in need and we love that there are so many wonderful organizations with which to be involved.



When I first began with Loudoun Sports Therapy Center I had some serious pain in m left back, hip and leg clear down to my toes. I'd just finished 8 visits to a different clinic with no gains made and was really worried that I was on a downhill slide and possibly surgery. The progress I've made here has been amazing and I'm feeling

100% better. I now have the tools, specific exercises to keep getting better. One of the things that has made such a difference is how wonderful every single person working here has been. So friendly and caring and just plain fun and its helped me psychologically and I love coming here. - Robbyn H. (2016)

Pain is not something you should have to live with or push through. The highly trained clinical staff at [Loudoun Sports Therapy Center](https://www.loudounsportstherapy.com) will help you identify and address your pain.

After a full one-on-one evaluation, they will design an individualized plan of care that will help you achieve goals that matter to your daily lifestyle.

If you have pain, DON'T WAIT!
Call [Loudoun Sports Therapy Center](https://www.loudounsportstherapy.com) TODAY and start your journey to PAIN-FREE LIVING!

703-450-4300

www.loudounsportstherapy.com



"I am a working mom and have a very active toddler. I experienced extreme lower back pain and radiating pain down my right side prior to coming to LSTC. The pain was so intense I could hardly get out of bed, let alone lift my daughter. During the course of my treatment at LSTC, my back became stronger, mobility improved substantially and today my pain is GONE! Thank you to the LSTC staff, especially Kate and Tricia for all you've done for me!"

- Akia M. (2016)

Overall, I feel physical therapy has dramatically improved my strength. I have also noticed a very good increase in mobility and flexibility. I know that physical therapy has helped reduce the pain and ultimately helped my overall health and well being. Everyone at LSTC has been AWESOME! I love coming here which is something I have never said about any PT office. Thanks for all your efforts!

- Doug T. (2016)



We strive to help our patients and the community understand the causes of lower back pain and sciatica. This free report answers the top 10 most burning questions we have received over the years.

Have you ever wondered what factors play a role in your back health and recovery?

Read on to learn more about how Loudoun Sports Therapy Center can best provide you with the tools you need to successfully relieve your lower back pain and keep you moving without discomfort.

Answer: There are 3 common causes of lower back pain and sciatica.

Here are some general guidelines for each:

- **Herniated Disc:** People with sciatica from a herniated disc usually have pain bending forward, twisting, coughing or sneezing.

The sciatica pain they experience is usually sharp and runs specifically down the back of the leg, possibly into the foot.

- **Stenosis / Arthritis:** People suffering from sciatica because of stenosis or arthritis usually answer yes to these 3 questions:

- 50 Years of age or older?
- Pain with standing or walking?
- Relief with sitting?

What is stenosis? Stenosis is a narrowing of the spinal canal, which causes increased pressure on the spinal cord and nerves.

What is arthritis? Arthritis is caused by vertebral joint degeneration. This results in increased joint stiffness, inflammation, and pain.

- **SI Joint / Pelvic Problems:** People suffering with sciatica from SI joint or pelvic problems usually have pain with sitting for long periods.

- The pain they experience is usually on the outside of the thigh.
- Symptoms may include heaviness of one leg or feeling twisted.



I can work my normal shift at my retail job without pain. Previously, after 2 hours the aching would start and I had difficulty bending over to pick something up off the floor. Now I move with more ease. After my shift is over I can get into my car without the aching and pain starting. I feel so much better. The therapists have been wonderful.

- Kathy Clayton 2016



Answer: On your back with pillows supporting beneath your knees to help take the stress off your spine is the best position.

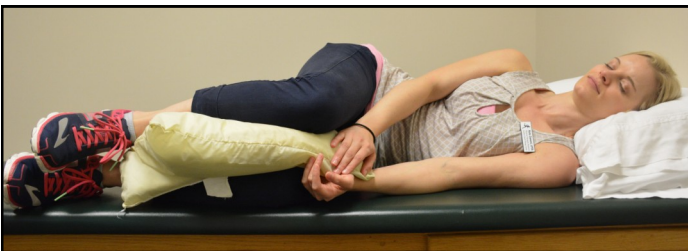
The second best position is on your side with a pillow between your knees to keep your spine properly aligned.

The worst position to sleep in is on your stomach because it increases pressure on your lower back.

Whatever position you choose to sleep in, the most important thing to remember is to keep your spine in "neutral".

"Neutral" means that your spine is not twisted to the right or left, and you maintain the natural curve of your spine with proper positioning. Pillows or folded towels can be placed under your knees, under your side, or under your feet to help you sleep in the least painful position for you.

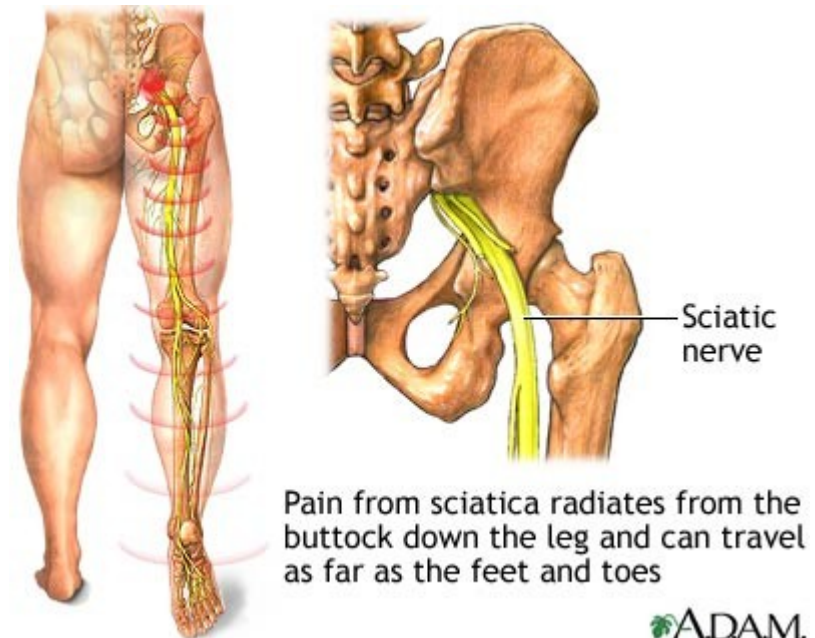
Proper sleeping positions:



Answer: Sciatica is caused by compression of the sciatic nerve, which originates in the lumbar spine region. When the sciatic nerve experiences increased pressure as a result of disc degeneration, joint degeneration, a bulging disc, or a tight muscle, the irritation of the nerve follows along the nerves pathway. This can cause pain down the back of your leg, into your groin, thigh, or foot.

"The sciatic nerve is the largest and longest single nerve in the human body; about as big around as a man's thumb at its largest point.

The nerve originates in the lower spine as nerve roots exit the spinal cord (through gaps in the bones at the back of the spine), and extends all the way down the back of the leg to the toes." - www.spine-health.com



ADAM.
Photo courtesy of www.interactiveanatomy.com

How long will it take before I start to see improvements?

Answer: Most people we see in the clinic start feeling an improvement in 2 to 3 visits, or within the first week of care.

If you go longer than 2 weeks without feeling better or moving better, the cause of your sciatica may be more severe than your X-ray or MRI results initially showed.

Can I be completely healed or will this come back again?

Answer: Most people we see who complete the 3 Phases of Healing (meaning motion and strength are back to normal, they no longer have pain, and they're back to doing all the activities they want to do without pain) have a much lower chance of their pain recurring.

The stronger a person is, the less likely the sciatica symptoms will come back.

Your body is a bit like a car. If you take care of it, regularly change the oil and keep it running and fine-tuned, there's little chance of a break down. If you ignore it, there is a higher chance it will break down and need repair.



How often should I do my exercises? And do I need to do them forever?

Answer: Most patients we treat for sciatica do their exercises at least once per day, every day.

Some will do them up to 3 times per day.

Doing the same exercises for years without altering your routine could be a mistake.

In general, to get stronger, your exercise program should progress and get more difficult. The reason for this is because with training, your body adapts. Increasing the difficulty of your exercises over time will keep you from plateauing.

Keeping that in mind, there are 2 rules to training:

1. Everything works.
2. Nothing works forever.

This means that any exercise (although painful) may make you stronger; but once your body adapts, it's time to move on to something different or more challenging.

One of the best programs you can move on to once you complete the first 3 stages of healing for your sciatica is a consistent walking program.

People who walk everyday have less risk of reinjuring their backs and have a recurrence of sciatica.



Photo from LSTC's Annual Walking Day Event

Answer: The best exercises for you depend on the cause of your sciatica.

As we discussed earlier, we cover the 3 most common causes of sciatica:

- Herniated Discs
- Stenosis / Arthritis
- Pelvic or SI joint problem

Each problem has a series of gradually advancing exercises.

So the key to picking the right exercises is to locate the cause of your sciatica and build a plan of care specifically tailored to your unique condition.

If you are uncertain about the cause of your back pain, the best advice is to seek the assistance of your physical therapist.

Answer: At Loudoun Sports Therapy Center, we use a minimalist approach, which allows patients to easily transition to an independent home exercise program after they have completed physical therapy.

In most cases, we don't use big, fancy, expensive equipment.

Our model focuses on world-class, hands-on manual therapy provided by our Physical Therapists, a treatment table and some basic exercise equipment you can use at home or on the road if you're traveling.

Most exercises can be done with a simple therapy ball, resistance bands and a safe place to exercise. We provide exercise bands free of charge to our patients, during and after care, as part of their comprehensive home exercise program.

This works best for most people.

Answer: It depends...it depends on YOU.

In general, it takes up to 4 to 8 weeks to go through the first 2 phases of healing (decreased pain, increased strength and mobility). It may take another 2 to 4 months to get back to all activities you want to do depending on how active you are. This is the third phase of healing: *return to normal function*.

Here are 10 variables that determine how fast someone can heal:

- **Overall health.** Healthy people who take care of themselves heal faster. Younger people also heal faster.
- **Other health issues** such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, tobacco use, alcohol abuse and body weight all influence healing rates...and increase the time it takes to heal.
- **Diet.** People who consume more nutrients in their calories (Dr. Joel Fuhrman calls this "Nutrarian") heal faster than those who primarily eat processed foods. Eating whole foods can help increase your nutrient intake.
- **Rest levels.** Our bodies need sleep and rest to rebuild. A lack of sleep slows healing time. Adult recommendations are 6-8 hours of sleep per night.
- **Stress levels.** People who have high levels of stress heal more slowly.
- **Sedentary lifestyle.** People who sit all day for work or to watch TV heal more slowly than those who are active.
- **People who follow advice and instruction** from top level healthcare professionals heal more quickly than those who do not follow-through with care.
- **People who are highly aware of their daily postures and habits** heal more quickly because they can adjust habits such as sleeping or sitting positions more quickly.
- **Readers** heal more quickly. People with higher attention spans are more likely to be self-educated on a topic and more likely to follow-through with successful treatment.
- **People who think there's hope** tend to be more persistent and won't let anything stop them.



Answer: If you are worried about your sciatica symptoms returning, the best thing to do is to **complete all 3 phases of healing with your physical therapist**. Regarding lower back pain and sciatica:

Phase 1: In this phase we focus on getting rid of the pain, numbness and tingling. During phase 1 you may feel the pain that was once radiating down your leg is now solely in your back. We call this centralizing of pain and it indicates that your pain symptoms and inflammation are beginning to subside.

Phase 2: During this phase, we focus on improving your strength, range of motion, and overall mobility. We will work with you on developing a more advanced exercise program to improve core and leg strength.

Phase 3: This is when we begin to focus on a treatment program that assists you in returning to the activities you were doing before the pain began. By the end of phase 3 you should have little to no pain, full strength and range of motion, and have regained normal mobility.

Once a patient has entered Phase 3 of their recovery, we ask them:

“What activities have you avoided in the past month that you want to get back to doing?”

And we work with them through advanced exercises to safely and systematically return to those activities while maintaining their pain free status.

Before discharging our patients we will provide them with:

- An extended home exercise program to help them maintain good strength and range of motion
- How to prevent a return of their lower back pain and sciatica
- How to recognize if they have suffered a relapse and what to do if that occurs

Phase 4: This includes both our return-to-sport and fitness programs. Our Return-To-Sport program is run by our certified Athletic Trainers and offers sport specific programming to advance an athlete’s strength and conditioning to aid in preventing future injuries while participating in their specific sport. Our Fitness Program is run by our Clinical Team and is designed specifically for those who want to continue their recovery in our clinic vs. a gym-like setting.

Phase 1 goals:

The early stages of recovery after injury or surgery are considered PHASE 1. During this time your physical therapy team will focus on the following goals:

- Control pain and inflammation
- Promote healing through exercise
- Prevent loss of range of motion

Phase 2 goals:

As you move through your physical therapy your treatment program will advance to focus on increasing your overall mobility. Your physical therapy team will focus on the following goals:

- Increased range of motion
- Increased strength
- Improved mobility

Phase 3 goals:

We will continue to advance your treatment plan. Our physical therapy goals will be achieved and you will have reached the finish line when you have completed PHASE 3 :

- Full relief of pain symptoms
- Maximize strength, range of motion, and mobility
- Full return to daily activities and recreational activities

Phase 4 goals:

You have completed your physical therapy but now want to make certain that you have no future episodes of pain or weakness. You want to be certain that you can prevent future injuries. PHASE 4 is our return-to-sport program that is run by our certified Athletic Trainers. In this program we focus on the following goals:

- Achieve high levels of strength and agility as related to your sport.
- Develop a sport specific training program to be used independently in and out-of-season.