

Piriformis Syndrome



Scan this QR Code to access a detailed video that enhances the information in this handout. It includes step by step guidance and visual demonstrations for each exercise.

What is piriformis syndrome?

Piriformis syndrome is a condition where the piriformis muscle, located deep in the buttock, irritates or compresses the sciatic nerve. This can lead to pain, tingling, and numbness radiating from the buttock down the leg, often mimicking sciatica symptoms.

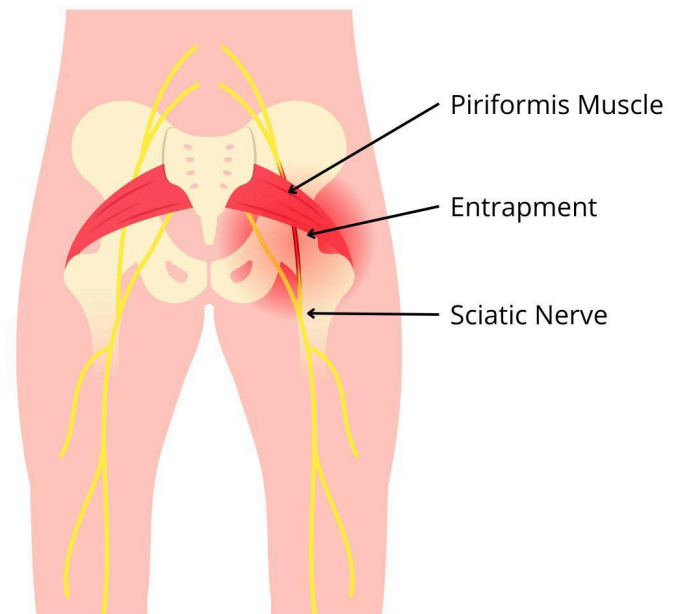
How is it treated?

Treatment typically includes rest, physical therapy exercises to stretch and strengthen the piriformis and surrounding muscles, and sometimes anti-inflammatory medications. In severe cases, injections or surgical options may be considered, but conservative treatments are often effective.

How long is the recovery?

Recovery time varies, but with consistent treatment, symptoms often improve within weeks. For some, a full return to normal activity may take a few months, depending on severity and adherence to therapy.

Resuming sports or activities should be gradual and based on pain tolerance. Avoid symptom-triggering activities until well-managed. Begin with low-impact exercises and gradually increase intensity.



Piriformis Syndrome Rehabilitation Exercises

Do the following rehabilitation program 1-2 times per day.

Piriformis Stretch

- Objective: stretch the piriformis muscle
- Start by lying on your back and bend your right knee towards your chest. Then gently guide the knee across your body towards the left shoulder. You should feel a stretch deep in the buttock area where the piriformis muscle is located.
- Hold for 30 seconds on each side.



Figure 4 Stretch

- Objective: stretch the piriformis and gluteal muscles
- While lying on your back, lift your right foot and put your right ankle over your left thigh, just above the knee, forming a figure 4 shape with your legs. Clasp your hands behind your left thigh and gently pull it toward your chest. You should feel a stretch in your right hip and in the glutes.
- Hold for 30 seconds on each side.



Hip Flexor Stretch

- Objective: stretch the hip flexors, improve hip alignment and mobility
- Begin by kneeling on the floor with the right knee on the ground and the left foot in front. Keep your torso upright and then slowly shift your weight forward by pressing your hips towards your front leg. You'll feel a stretch along the front of your hip and thigh on the right side.
- Hold for 30 seconds on each side.



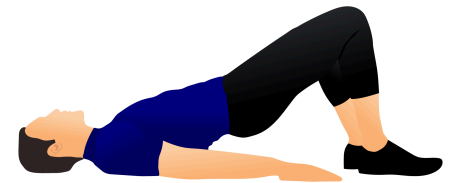
Clamshells

- Objective: strengthen the glutes to assist with hip stabilization and rotation
- Start by lying on your right side with your legs stacked on top of each other and your knees bent to a 45 degree angle. Keep your feet together and lift your left knee as high as comfortably possible. Hold the movement briefly at the top and then slowly lower back to the starting position.
- Perform 8 to 10 repetitions, slow and controlled.



Glute Hip Bridge

- Objective: strengthen the gluteus maximus to help with pelvic stability
- Lie down with your knees bent and feet flat. Keep your arms flat at your sides. Lift your hips, aiming to form a straight line from your shoulders to your knees. Squeeze your glutes and hold briefly at the top before gently lowering back down. To increase the challenge, wrap a resistance band around your waist.
- Perform 8 to 10 repetitions, slow and controlled.



Bird Dog

- Objective: strengthen the core and spine to support the pelvis
- Start on your hands and knees in tabletop position. Make sure your hands are directly underneath your shoulders and that your knees are under your hips. Extend your right arm straight out in front of you at shoulder height. At the same time, extend your left leg straight out behind you at hip height. Hold this position for a brief moment and then slowly return to the starting position. Then repeat the movement with your left arm and right leg.
- Perform 8 to 10 repetitions, slow and controlled.

