

Lateral Hip pain

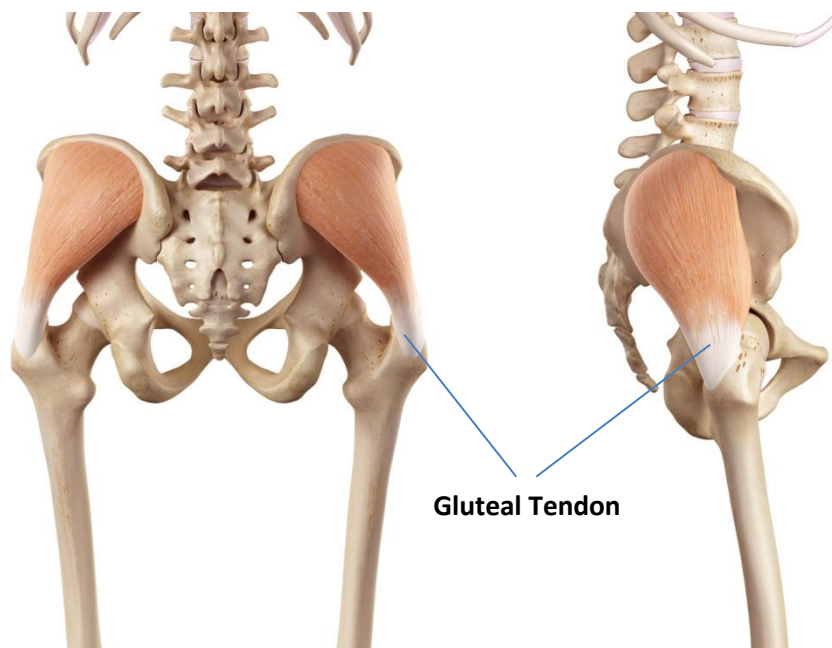
Can also known as: Greater trochanteric pain syndrome, hip bursitis, hip tendinopathy, hip tendinitis, gluteal tendinopathy.

About:

Lateral hip pain is a common condition affecting 1 in 4 people in their life time. It occurs when the tissues that lie over the hip bone become irritated. There are many soft tissues around this area which may be responsible for producing your pain.

These tissues include:

- Tendons (tough bundles of connective tissue that connect muscles to the bones)
- Muscles (Bundles of muscle fibres that contract to produce movement at a joint)
- Bursae (fluid-filled sacs that help smooth movement between muscles, tendons and the hip bone).



Causes:

Research has found a number of factors that can cause lateral hip pain. These include:



Excellent care at the heart of the community

- Being female
- During or after the menopause
- Being unfit
- Weakness of the hip muscles
- Being overweight
- Smoking
- Poor sitting posture

Normally a number of reasons all cause the irritation however the most common ones include:

- Compression of the soft tissues - due to poor muscles and posture.
- A fall or direct blow to the area
- Overloading - due to weakness in the muscles.

Overloading happens when your soft tissues (especially tendons) struggle to cope with the strain applied to them. This may start after a sudden increase in activity, especially if the activity was repetitive and/or a bit more than you would usually do (overuse).

For example:

- walking or standing for longer or further than is normal for you
- Sitting for a long period of time in the same position
- Starting new sports that involve high levels of jumping and landing (i.e. dancing, tennis, athletics), and your body not being used to this amount of exercise.

Older adults may develop symptoms more gradually simply due to the normal aging process within the tendons of the body.



Management

What can I do to help myself?

Evidence shows that the most effective management of lateral hip pain involves:

- Initially reducing the amount of strain or load placed on the soft tissues = **rest from the things that bring your pain on.**
- Restarting strength exercises slowly to help rebuild the tendon = **graded loading**

Pain Relief Medication – Over the counter painkillers may be helpful, such as Paracetamol, Ibuprofen or creams that you can buy at the chemist. Your pharmacist/GP will be able to give you expert advice if you have any concerns regarding medication. It should be considered that pain ‘killers’ are unlikely to take away your pain completely but allow it to feel more settled.

Modifying Activities – It is important to exercise but in the short-term it can be helpful to modify your activities. This is to help prevent further aggravating your sensitive tissues.

- It is important to continue with day to day activity as pain allows, this can help prevent further deconditioning.
- Pacing activities by striking balance between rest and activity. It can be useful to breakdown your activities into more manageable chunks. This will stop irritating the tendon and allow for healing to continue.
- Regular gentle movement can help prevent the hip joint from becoming stiffer and more painful.
- When you are standing still, avoid leaning on one hip and try to keep your weight evenly through both feet.
- Avoid sleeping on the aggravated side. When sleeping on the opposite hip, try placing one or two pillows between your knees to stop your painful leg crossing past your belly button.



- Avoid sitting for long periods longer than 20-30 mins. Low seats like sofas and car may irritate the tendon. Avoid crossing your legs or sitting with your legs out to the side.
- When sitting in a car seat or low sofa, try placing a cushion or pillow under your buttocks to raise your sitting position (ideally with the hips above the knees).
- Avoid carrying bags on onside of your body. Try distributing weight evenly by using a rucksack instead.
- If you are limping because of your hip pain then using a walking aid can help. Use the walking stick in the opposite hand to the bad hip.

We have made this video to help explain this in more detail:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnGBaI2wDfM>

The aim of exercise is to strengthen the muscles and help your body heal. A balance needs to be found between exercising enough to get the benefit it brings, without irritating it further.

Rules:

Do not try to 'push through the pain' as this will likely irritate the tendon further making it less tolerant of exercise. The pain should not last for hours and days after doing the exercises. The exercises **DO NOT NEED TO BE DONE EVERYDAY**, but 3-4 times a week is usually enough.

Ways to vary exercise intensity include:

- Changing the number of repetitions or time spent doing the exercise
- Performing the exercise more times throughout the day
- Increasing the resistance/weight
- Performing the exercise on the affected leg only (e.g. heel raises on one leg)



Specific hip muscle strengthening exercise video can be found here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= WL3gqpyB48>

Bridge exercise

While lying on your back, knees bent and feet flat on the floor, tighten your lower abdominals, squeeze your buttocks and then raise your buttocks off the floor or bed as creating a 'Bridge' with your body. Hold for 5 secs and then lower yourself and repeat for 30 seconds. The goal is to do 3-5 sets.



Single leg Bridge exercise

While lying on your back, bend your knees, feet flat on the floor and then lift one leg off the floor. Next, tighten your lower abdominals, squeeze your buttocks and raise your buttocks off the floor or bed as creating a 'Bridge' with your body. Hold for 5 secs and then lower yourself and repeat for 30 secs. The goal is to do 3-5 sets.



Single leg balance exercise

Stand on one leg and maintain your balance. Maintain a slightly bent knee on the stance side. Hold and maintain your balance for 20/30 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times.



Goblet squat exercise

Stand with your feet wider than your shoulders and your arms at your sides. Turn your feet slightly outward. This is the starting position. Keeping your chest up and core engaged, push your hips back, bend your knees, and lower your body until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor. As you squat down, bring your hands together in front of your chest. Pause, and then return to the starting position. Repeat the exercise for 30 seconds. The goal is to do 3-5 sets.



Lunge exercise

Start by standing with feet shoulder-width-apart. Next, take a step forward and allow your front knee to bend. Your back knee may bend as well. Then, return to original position, or you may walk and take a step forward and repeat with the other leg. Repeat the exercise for 30 seconds. The goal is to do 3-5 sets.



Weight Loss – There is evidence that being overweight can increase the risk of developing lateral hip pain and a worse outcome for recovery. Reducing your bodyweight will help reduce the strain on the soft tissues. If weight loss has been discussed with you by a GP or other healthcare professional useful resources to help achieve effective weight loss can be found here ([hyperlink to weight loss info](#))

Education – It is well researched that having a better understanding of your condition helps reduce worries about this. This can help you manage your condition more effectively and return to function more quickly.



Heat or Cold Packs – Apply either a hot or cold pack (whichever you prefer) to the painful hip for 15-20 minutes. Ensure you wrap any pack in a damp tea towel to avoid direct contact burning the skin. This process can be repeated multiple times a day as long as the skin returns to normal temperature between applications.

Smoking - Evidence suggests that smokers are more likely to suffer more severe and persistent pain than non- smokers. Nicotine can also cause heightened pain sensitivity.

What to do if I'm in need of more help?

Review your Medication – If your pain is still not well controlled despite the above strategies it is recommended you consult with your GP/Pharmacist to review your current medication and treatment options.

Review with your physiotherapist – Should you continue to be significantly limited with your day to day activities or would like some further advice please feel free to contact your Physiotherapist who can expertly review your rehabilitation options.

