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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Pain at the Side of Your Hip?

Have you ever felt pain at the side of your hip, particularly at night or when you try to lie on it? If you have, it may be caused by an inflamed “trochanteric bursa” that is located at the outside of your hip. A bursa is a small sac of fluid that cushions the places where tendons, ligaments, and muscles move over bones. In this instance, the bursa overlying the trochanteric region of your hipbone may have become inflamed and sore. This problem usually affects middle-aged to elderly persons, women more often than men, but it can develop in younger people as well. There are hundreds of bursae (plural for bursa) in the human body, especially around the joints of the shoulder, hip, knee, and ankle. Their job is to help prevent or decrease friction between surfaces that move in opposite directions. In the case of the hip, muscles of the hip and buttock regions attach to a large tendon that extends over the hip and downward to just below the outside of the knee. When these muscles become too tight, they put tension on the long tendon as it passes over the trochanteric region or outside of the hip. This results in the tendon putting pressure on the underlying bursa, making it inflamed and sore.



There are many different things you can do to make the muscles of your hip and buttock too tight, contributing to trochanteric bursitis. The most common is when you alter or start a new exercise program. For example, going on a long hike, particularly when you walk uphill, uses many of the muscles that attach to the tendon I previously mentioned. As the muscles pull on the tendon, it rubs repetitively over the bursa and irritates it. Another common cause is inactivity. For example, if you lie directly on the trochanteric region of the hip and its bursae for too long, you could aggravate the bursae directly. As well, if your hip and buttock muscles are

tight simply because you do not use them, the associated tendon will again apply pressure on the bursa.

Every week in our office we are treating patients with trochanteric bursitis and they often respond very well. However, the best treatment for any physical problem is prevention. Therefore, I have included a stretch you can do at home to relax and lengthen the hip muscles. This will help prevent excessive pressure from being put on the bursa and contribute to you not getting the problem in the first place. If you have problems understanding this stretching exercise, feel free to drop by my office for some help.



To stretch the muscles around the right hip, stand with your left arm reaching outward a comfortable distance so that your hand safely touches the wall. Then, the left leg is moved either behind (as in the diagram) or in front of the right leg. Next, lean your upper body towards the wall (to the left) and push your right hip away from the wall. You should feel a stretching sensation just above your right hip. **NOTE:** If you are even remotely at risk of having a hip fracture, a modified form of this exercise must be done instead.