

A LOOK @ PIRIFORMIS SYNDROME

By

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Like most of us, at some point in your life you will encounter back pain. But if you are a runner, that time can be sooner than later. There can be several risk factors when trying to get to the root of common back problems. Some of which, are unknown to most of us.

For an example, did you know that most running shoes will start to loose support after about 500 hundred miles, or that it is best to swap them out with another pair in between runs to help them regain their shape? When a running shoe begins to loose its shape you loose some of your back support. And depending on your body type and gait, back pains can develop shortly thereafter.

In some cases, a simple purchase of a new pair of shoes can be just what the doctor ordered. In others cases, it could be associated with, sciatica, or a compression of the sciatic nerve.

However, something else can be the culprit, Piriformis Syndrome. These small muscles on the back of the hip can cause significant back pains in runners without them even knowing it, and because this group of muscles sit atop the sciatic nerve it can easily be the cause of back pain, especially in high mileage runners.

One of the causes of Piriformis Syndrome is weakening of the hip and gluteus maximus muscle. A weak gluteus maximus muscle can cause the piriformis muscles to become overworked and overstretched. This causes irritation to the nearby sciatic nerve.

Fortunately, they are exercises and treatments you can do to help strengthen the muscles in and around the area before your workouts to manage the pain. To reduce chronic pain, sufferers should sleep on their side with a pillow between their legs, and sit with their knees straight.

So, if you are a runner, and are suffering from lower back pain, be sure to be aware of your shoes, and do stretches to help the Piriformis muscles, before claiming, "it is just sciatica".