

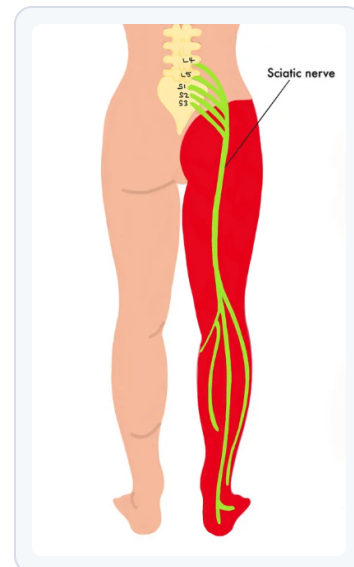
Sciatica

That sharp, shooting pain down the back of your leg has a name, but it may not mean what you think. Here's what sciatica actually is, why it happens, and why the outlook is better than it feels.

1 Sciatica is a symptom, not a disease

"Sciatica" simply describes **pain that travels down the leg** along the path of the sciatic nerve, the large nerve that runs from your lower back through your buttock and down each leg. It is a description of what you feel, not a diagnosis in itself.

The pain starts where one of the nerve's roots leaves your spine and becomes **irritated**. Most often a disc in your lower back is pressing on or inflaming that nerve root. Because the nerve runs the length of your leg, the irritation can be felt far from its source, in your thigh, calf, or foot.



The **sciatic nerve** runs from the L4–S3 nerve roots down the back of the leg.

2 Why it can burn, tingle, or go numb

A nerve is like a live wire carrying signals. When a nerve root is irritated, two things happen: the surrounding tissue **inflames**, and the nerve may be gently **compressed**. That combination produces the classic mix of sciatica sensations, sharp or shooting pain, burning, pins-and-needles, or numbness, anywhere along the nerve's path.

THE REASSURING PART

Most sciatica settles on its own. Because it is usually an irritated nerve rather than a damaged one, the large majority of people improve substantially within 6 to 12 weeks with simple, active care, and many people recover without any surgery. Staying gently active, rather than resting in bed, is one of the best things you can do.

3 How we help it settle

Our goal is to calm the irritated nerve root, take pressure off it, and keep you moving safely while it recovers.

- **Hands-on care** to ease pressure and restore movement
- **Specific positions** that relieve the nerve, not aggravate it
- **Targeted exercise** to support the low back and nerve
- **Activity coaching** so you stay mobile as it heals

! When to seek care right away

Rare, but if you notice any of these, seek urgent medical care right away: **loss of bladder or bowel control, numbness in the groin or saddle area, rapidly worsening weakness in the leg**, or symptoms in **both legs at once**. These are uncommon but need prompt attention.

The takeaway: sciatica is an irritated nerve, not a damaged leg, and irritated nerves calm down. We'll guide that recovery with you.