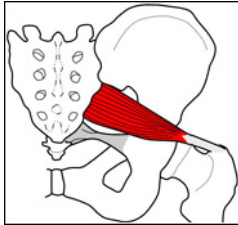


Piriformis Stretch by Brad L. Surette, BA, RMT

The piriformis muscle is located in the buttocks region.

As you can see in the photo below, the piriformis attaches to the sacrum (the large triangular bone at the base of the spine) and to the top of the femur (the large bone in your thigh).



A hypertonic (tight) piriformis can pull on the pelvic crest also putting strain on the QL muscles (quadratus lumborum) in your lower back leading to an array of problems.

If you consider the amount of time this muscle is compressed while sitting, driving, or flying, you will quickly realize that this area tends to get annoyed or aggravated quite easily.

Sometimes low back discomfort or hip pain can actually be caused by pain originating from a trigger point in your piriformis.

Did you know that trigger points in the piriformis muscle are quite common?

Trigger points are most often formed and experienced due to repetitive stress or injury to the area.

The characteristic trait of an active trigger point is that a referral pain is most often felt elsewhere in the body.

Once a trigger point is activated it needs to be released in order to experience lasting relief.

If you've been experiencing this type of pain for years with no resolve, all is not lost. Most Registered Massage Therapists are trained to find the root of your pain and also know the key places to treat in addition to the indicated area of discomfort.

A client may report feeling an intense pressure where the therapist is applying an ischemic compression AND notice a sharp, shooting pain in another area until it releases.

In between treatments, you might like to try the following stretch and release techniques that can be performed at home or even in the office.

First, the release. Lie with your back on the floor and your knees bent so that your feet are flat on the floor as well.

Place a tennis ball in the middle

of your right buttock. The ball should be placed where your back pocket would be. Very gently roll onto the ball. Pause each time the sensation becomes uncomfortable; hold for a full count of thirty seconds. Continue to roll further onto the ball, each time pausing and counting to thirty until no further discomfort is noted. Repeat on opposite side.

Next, the stretch. Begin sitting up straight in a sturdy chair. Cross your left ankle over your right knee in a figure four type position. Lean forward.

Ideally, your crossed leg will be parallel or in line with your knee.



You should feel a nice stretch in the piriformis muscle on the same side as the crossed leg. Hold for thirty seconds before switching leg positions to repeat the stretch on the opposite side.

- Brad L. Surette, BA, RMT