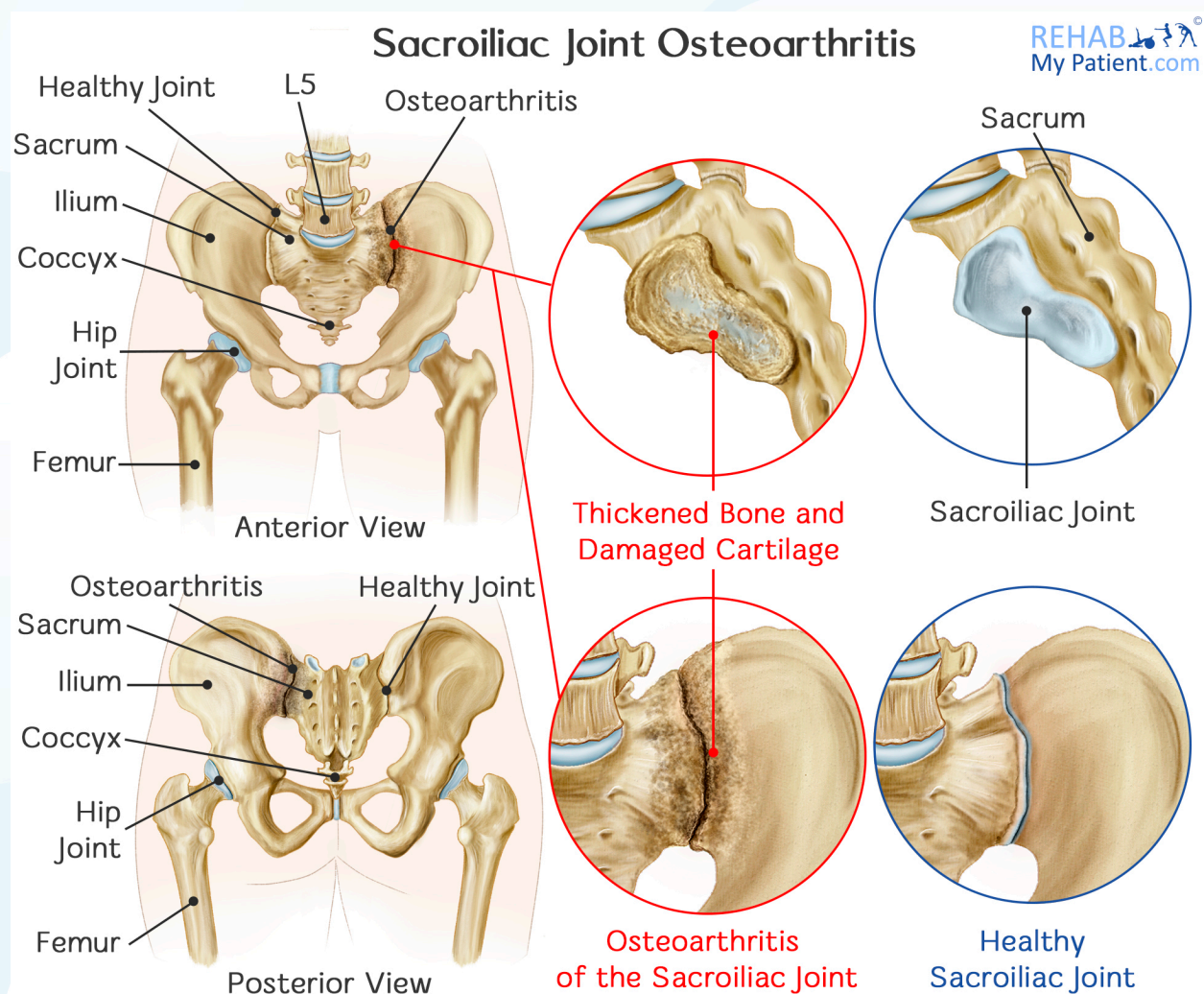


Sacroiliac Joint Osteoarthritis

The sacroiliac joint (SIJ) lies low in the back where the spine meets the pelvis. Discomfort in this area is a symptom that can come on from a number of conditions, one being osteoarthritis. This degenerative joint disease is often associated with the breakdown of the cartilage in the joint. Cartilage is supposed to be a firm, rubbery material that cushions and covers the bone ends in normal joints. The main function is to reduce the amount of friction felt in the joints. In cases of osteoarthritis, the cartilage will become worn and this leaves bone unprotected. The body then tries to lay down more bone forming osteophytes, or thickening the joint to naturally try to fuse the joint.

Patients often experience pain in the top of the buttock, usually one sided. It's unusual to get SIJ pains both sides. Quite often the pain is associated with lower back pain, and this can be related to degenerative problems in the spine.



Possible Causes of SIJ Osteoarthritis

1. **Wear and Tear** – general over-use over many decades can cause wear to the SIJ. Often people who have had manual jobs or played a lot of sport could be sufferers. However, other joints are more commonly affected such as the hips and knees.
2. **Family History of Arthritis** – it can run in families.
3. **Ankylosing Spondylitis** – this is an inflammatory condition affecting the spine and other areas which is signified by fusion of the sacroiliac joints.

How to Treat Sacroiliac Joint Osteoarthritis:

1. **Ice**
Apply ice to the affected area for 5-10 minutes at a time three to five times per day. Usually the best place to put the ice is where the pain is (which should be at the top of the buttock).
2. **Anti-Inflammatory Medication**
Taking an anti-inflammatory medication will help to alleviate symptoms of pain and inflammation in the affected joint. Limit NSAID use for 2 weeks. If medication is not working, get to a manual therapist.
3. **Manual Therapy**
Therapy such as physiotherapy, osteopathy and chiropractic can be beneficial to mobilise or manipulate the sacroiliac joint. A therapist will likely prescribe an exercise program.
4. **Exercise**
Physical activity can help with improving movement in the joints and strengthening the muscles that surround the joints. Swimming and other non-weight bearing exercises may help reduce pressure through the SIJ. Try doing gentle exercises so as not to overdo it.
5. **Steroid Injections**
Whenever other options have failed, you might have no other option beyond surgery to relieve the chronic pain within the sacroiliac joint.

Tips:

- If you are overweight, try losing a few pounds to get back to an ideal weight for your height and body type.
- If you recently sustained an injury from sports, work or an accident, you are more likely to develop osteoarthritis in your joints.
- Some individuals have an inherited defect in their genes that are responsible for making the cartilage, which causes the joints to deteriorate rapidly.
- Even though age does play a factor in the condition, it isn't something that is inevitable.
- Try to avoid overusing your joints to prevent osteoporosis from developing.