

Snapping Hip Syndrome

Snapping hip syndrome is often referred to as dancer's hip. In this condition, you will hear a snapping sound or end up feeling a snapping in your hip whenever you walk, get up from a chair, run or swing the leg around. For the majority of individuals, the condition is more annoying than anything. The only symptom is a snapping sound or the sensation of snapping in the joint. For athletes and dancers, other symptoms can include weakness and pain that ends up interfering with their athletic performance.

The popping or snapping sensation can be in different places of the hip. Lateral snapping is most common, which is caused by the iliotibial band flicking across the greater trochanter.

A lot of hips do pop, crack, click, snap and crunch. The hip is a mobile joint, and lots of tendons and muscles pass around it. So having a popping or clicky hip is not a concerning sign due to being so common. However, if the click is painful, this needs to be investigated by a manual therapist.

Snapping Hip Syndrome Anatomy

The hip is a ball and socket joint connecting the thigh bone (femur) to the pelvis socket. It allows the leg to move. The upper leg bone has two protrusions on it, known as the greater trochanter and lesser trochanter. The greater trochanter is the place where several muscles from the buttocks attach and meet to promote hip abduction and movement from one side to the other.

Along the outside of your leg you have a tight fibrous band known as the iliotibial band. This helps to stabilize the pelvis and hip, but with runners and long distance walkers it can cause issues and contribute to snapping hip, among other problems.

There are also muscles that flex (lift your leg up) your hip, and these are the iliopsoas and the rectus femoris. Both can flick over a bony protuberance on the hip and cause a snapping feeling.

Snapping hip is similar to a rubbing of the muscle or tendon over the bone. Often there is a small sac of fluid called a bursa that protects the tendon from the bone. The bursa can become inflamed after repeated irritation from snapping hip. This is known as bursitis, and the most common is trochanteric bursitis.

How to Treat Snapping Hip Syndrome:

1. Reduce Activities that May be Causing the Problem

One of the best, and easiest, things you can do is to refrain from engaging in any activities that cause pain and inflammation in the joint. Your hip needs time to rest and heal, so you have to engage in activities in moderation.

2. Ice

Apply ice to the affected area for 5-10 minutes at a time three to five times per day to reduce swelling and pain in the hip. Make sure to wrap the ice in a thin towel to prevent any ice burn from occurring.

3. Physical Therapy

Physical therapy places an emphasis on strengthening, stretching and re-balancing the joint. This can help to relieve some of the pain and pressure that you are currently dealing with in the affected area.

4. Corticosteroid Injection

If you are suffering with inflammation, especially bursitis, a corticosteroid injection can often help to alleviate some of that swelling.

Tips:

- For those who are involved in sporting activities or those activities requiring a repeated amount of bending at the hip joint, the likelihood of dealing with a snapping hip are far more common.
- Dancers tend to be vulnerable to this condition due to the movement and strenuous practice routine they engage in, so make sure and take time to rest and recover.
- To reduce discomfort in the area, try taking an anti-inflammatory medication.
- Modify your current activities to avoid any repetitive movements in the hip joint. Swim using only your arms or reduce the time you spend riding a bicycle for starters.
- Reduce your current activity levels and try applying ice to the injured area to see if that will help with the healing process.
- It is important to understand that popping, clicking, snapping or cracking in the hip joint is completely normal and not a sign of pathology.