

Psoas Syndrome

In comparison to other muscular conditions, psoas syndrome is somewhat uncommon and the condition is typically a grey area for diagnosis. Typically, those suffering from psoas syndrome have groin pain at the top and front of their thigh.

The rarity of the condition means it is often misdiagnosed. Plus, many of the symptoms of psoas syndrome can also occur with other conditions. Before reaching a diagnosis of psoas syndrome it is important to rule out other conditions first, like osteoarthritis of the hip, and hip impingement syndrome.

What is the Cause of Psoas Syndrome?

Psoas syndrome occurs when the psoas muscle, a long muscle typically measuring up to 16 inches, becomes injured. The muscle stretches from the lower lumbar area of the spine, extending through the pelvis, and reaching the femur (thigh bone). Its primary function is to flex the hip joint and assist with lifting the upper leg, such as how one raises their leg to walk.

It is unlikely for anyone to get psoas syndrome without an obvious onset. Runners, athletes and anyone who participates in plyometric jumping exercises can be at higher risk based on how they move their bodies. The precise cause of psoas syndrome isn't known, as muscle strains can occur for a wide variety of reasons. People who do a lot of kicking like footballers, or in sports like martial arts could strain the psoas muscle when kicking. It is also possible to tear the psoas muscle, and that typically occurs when going to strike a ball with the foot, but mishitting the ball and hitting the ground first.

What Are the Symptoms of Psoas Syndrome?

Psoas syndrome can come with a range of symptoms, including:

- Groin pain
- Lower back pain
- Pain in the buttock
- Pain or difficulty when getting into or out of a car
- Radiating pain down the front of the leg
- Pelvic pain
- Shuffling or limping when walking

Many of the symptoms can also be found in other conditions, some of which are serious.

If you have any of the symptoms listed above, it's best to consult with a healthcare professional. They can determine which condition is likely the cause, ensuring you get a proper diagnosis, and recommend an appropriate treatment plan.

Typically, your doctor or therapist will begin by performing a physical exam focused on the spine, hip, and leg areas. Radiological imaging is also common as a diagnostic tool.

Treating Psoas Syndrome

1. Exercise: In most cases, exercise is the best treatment for psoas syndrome. Usually, your physician or a physical therapist will recommend specific exercises that can be done during outpatient office visits and at home. They'll also let you know how frequently you need to go through the routine and how many repetitions of each move is required for optimal results.

2. Physical Therapy, Osteopathy, Chiropractic and Sports Massage: treatments are designed to manipulate, stretch, and strengthen the psoas muscle as well as surrounding areas, including the spine and hip joints. They are selected specifically to engage the psoas muscle in the ideal fashion, allowing your body to repair the injury.
3. Electrotherapy and Acupuncture: if conventional exercises and manual therapies are not helping, you could consider other forms of treatment such as electrotherapy (typically ultrasound, LASER or shockwave) and acupuncture.
4. Injection – this is very rare, but a hip specialist may inject under ultrasound guidance. It is unlikely to be performed by a normal doctor.

Tips:

It is important that all exercise-related instructions from your doctor be followed closely. This includes using the proper technique and frequency of the provided exercises as well as avoiding activities that may aggravate your condition.

With the proper care and time, psoas syndrome can fully recover, allowing you to return to your normal routine. Additionally, by following your doctor's guidance, you can likely avoid a recurrence of psoas syndrome in the future.

Working with a running coach, football coach, and wearing suitable footwear can all help to prevent any re-occurrence.