

# Patient Help Sheet

## Acupuncture for sciatica

Here are some tips that you can use to help balance and support your health during this time. Please feel free to call me if you have further questions or concerns.

"Keep your vitality. A life without health is like a river without water." - Maxime Lagace

Sciatica is the pain caused by pressure or irritation of the sciatic nerve, which runs from the lower back to the sole of the foot. The irritation can lead to pain anywhere along the sciatic nerve, and it can also create a lack of muscle power to the legs and cause sensations in the legs, buttocks and low back to change. Current statistics show that up to 10 percent of the population between the ages of 25 to 45 are dealing with or have experienced sciatic pain.

The sciatic nerve is the largest nerve in the body. It consists of a large bundle of smaller nerves that begin in the low back region of the spine, travel down the buttocks and move through the leg. Symptoms of sciatica include radiating pain, numbness and tingling. Irritation of the sciatic nerve can be caused by muscle spasms, spinal disc compression or slipped spinal discs.

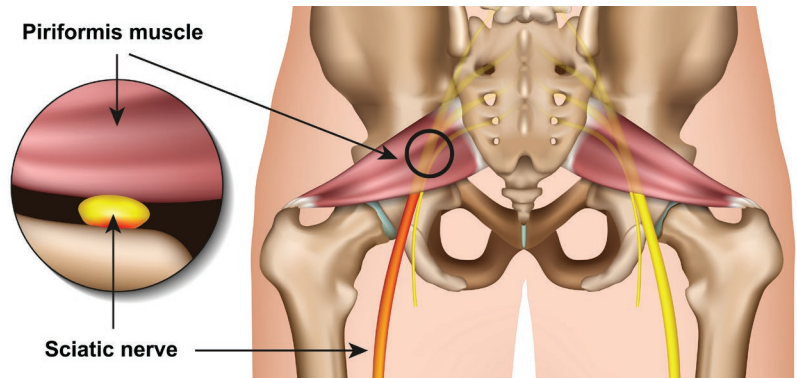
In traditional Chinese medical theory, blood stagnation is the most common cause of sciatica. Blood stagnation can affect the soft tissue of the lumbar spine, hips and pelvis. This is what causes the muscles to spasm, then creating extra tension that triggers the shooting pain associated with sciatica.

Traditional Chinese Medicine suggests several treatment modalities for managing sciatica.

### Dietary and Lifestyle Recommendations for Sciatica:

Adding potassium to your diet can help you heal from sciatica. Bananas, oranges, potatoes and spirulina are all good sources of potassium. Dark, leafy vegetables and legumes, such as black beans, kidney beans and soybeans are also beneficial when dealing with sciatica. Avoid foods that create dampness in the body, such as spicy, greasy or fried foods and dairy.

Incorporating daily exercise and stretching into your life can also help. The low back and lumbar spine may become weak if they are neglected, so sitting for long periods of time without getting up can be very detrimental. This also has a way of weakening the muscles of the lumbar area, which then can lead to slipped discs. Stretching and moving throughout the day, even after the pain has subsided, is vital to a healthy back.



**Acupuncture for sciatica:** Many studies have shown acupuncture is more effective at relieving the pain, numbness and tingling associated with sciatica than modern medicinal treatments. Acupuncture treatments can help to reprogram the muscles to stay in a relaxed position. Acupuncture treatments can also help treat sciatica by releasing natural painkillers like endorphins and enkephalins from the brain and neurologic system.

### Acupuncture points for sciatica:

**Urinary bladder 23:** This point is located on the lower back, halfway between the lowest ribs and the hip bone and on either side of the muscle group that runs right up the spine. This point reduces muscle tension and provides relief from low-back pain.

**Urinary bladder 40:** This point is located directly in the middle of the crease at the back of each knee. This point treats all the major pain sensations felt along the spine. It also helps to control muscle spasms, knee stiffness, arthritis, leg pain and it helps to dissipate excess heat trapped in the body.

