

4th Edition

# Top 10 Tips To End Annoying

# SCIATICA PAIN



  
EL PASO  
MANUAL PHYSICAL THERAPY

**Avoid injections, prevent surgery, and  
stop taking pain medications.**

By Leading USA Physical Therapist, Dr. David Middaugh, PT, DPT, FAAOMPT

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# About The Author

Dr. David graduated from Jefferson High School in 2004. He then attended the University of Texas at Austin through 2007 on a full-ride scholarship completing a 4 year degree in 3.5 years. He then went on to complete a doctorate in physical therapy at Texas State University - San Marcos in 2011. Dr. David then completed a unique fellowship/ residency training in 2015.



Less than 1% of physical therapists in the nation have completed this level of specialization. Having only been a PT for a little over a decade, this gives Dr. David the skills and knowledge of an expert clinician that has practiced for 30+ years.

Dr. David founded El Paso Manual Physical Therapy with the intent of helping people avoid surgery, get off pain medication and keep up an active lifestyle. In 2019, Dr. David started posting regularly to YouTube and has since then seen the EPMPT channel grow to over 250,000 subscribers. He continues to use the platform to share expert tips, advice, and exercises to people all around the world.

# Introduction

Hey there!

Thank you for downloading “Top 10 Tips to End Annoying Sciatica Pain.”

I will share with you very powerful principles and strategies you can make work for you. Some will be over time and others almost instantly.

They’re in no particular order and they all have one thing in common: **they all work.**

Truth is, without knowing your sciatica pain or your history intimately, I can’t tell you which of these will work best for you. Even if I did know the root cause of your sciatica problem there are no guarantee that any one single strategy will work.

What you’re about to read are tips and strategies that I’ve compiled through my intense years of study and busy years of practicing.

I’ve worked hard for my clients to blend the latest research with the most practical use. I’ve been able to narrow down what really does and doesn’t work when it comes to fixing sciatica pain.

This guide shows you how to actually get to the root cause of sciatica pain – for no cost to you, other than your time.

**Enjoy the tips!**

# Tip #1 - Ice AND Heat

There is much debate about whether ice is better to use than heat. The research is EXTREMELY confusing for most people (even for medical professionals!)

Let me give you the super simple 2 sentence explanation about it:

- A certain percentage of the population gets better with ice and another gets better with heat.
- Some body parts respond better to ice and others get better with heat.



So, here's my expert advice: **Try both!**

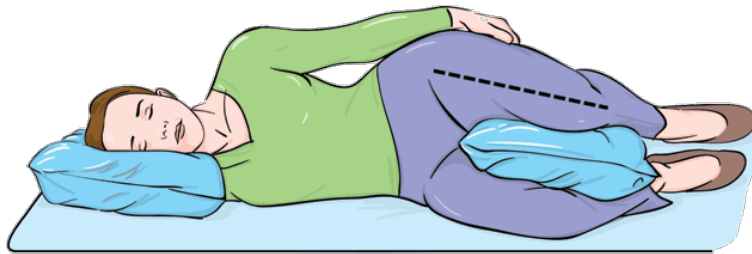
Whether you use ice or heat, apply it for 15 minutes then take it off for 15 minutes. Repeat for 1-2 hours.

If one doesn't work try the other. Do a little trial and error to find which helps you better. If you can get some relief with ice or heat, that will set you up to take less pain medications.

# Tip #2 - Sleep with a Pillow Between your Knees

Many people already do this even if they don't have sciatica problems, but it becomes especially important when they have active sciatica.

The sciatic nerve gets stretched out slightly when people lie on their side. In a normal sciatic nerve it's no problem, but with an aggravated sciatic nerve it can be very painful.



Lie on your side with the knees bent comfortably. Place 1-2 pillows between your knees so that your knees are about 4-6+ inches apart.

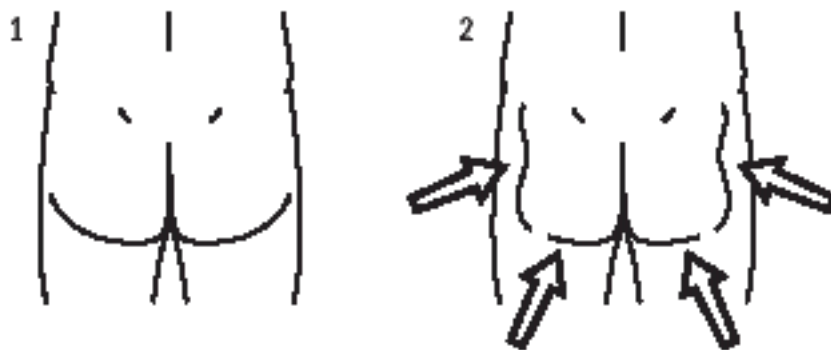
In many cases people with sciatica have trouble lying on their side. Try sleeping on the other side or you can place pillows behind you and lean back so that you're still on your side but leaning back on a pillow.

# Tip #3 - Standing Isometric Butt Squeezes

This is a rarely used but is a super effective and practical exercise to do.

You can do it just about anywhere that you can stand up and if you're sneaky about it, no one will even know that you're doing it!

While standing, squeeze your butt muscles together at 100% intensity and hold it for 10 seconds.



Avoid arching your back when doing this as it could hurt your back.

Repeat 10-15 times every hour while your symptoms last.

*Important note: In 2 out of 10 people this exercise will aggravate the sciatica, even when it is done right. This is a sign that your sciatica condition is quite severe and likely needs very customized exercises to start out.*

# Tip #4 - Isometric Bridges

This is a more commonly done physical therapy exercise, but it's rarely done right!

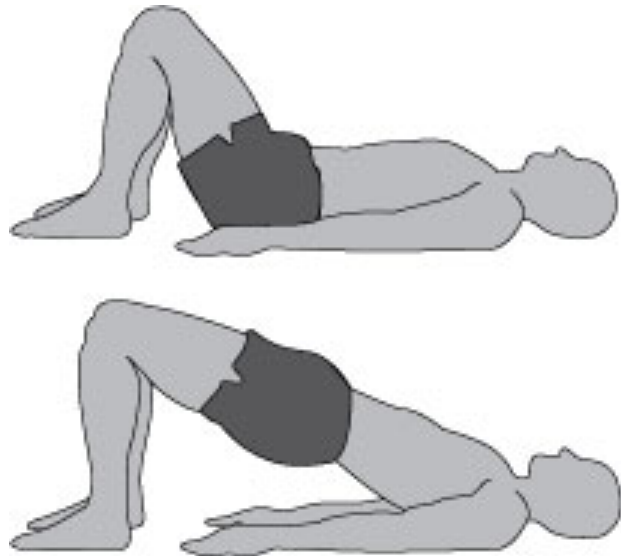
Start by lying on your back with knees bent comfortably

Without lifting your body, squeeze your butt muscles to 100% intensity.

Then carefully lift your hips 1-2 inches.

Repeat for 10-15 reps and hold for 10 seconds each time.

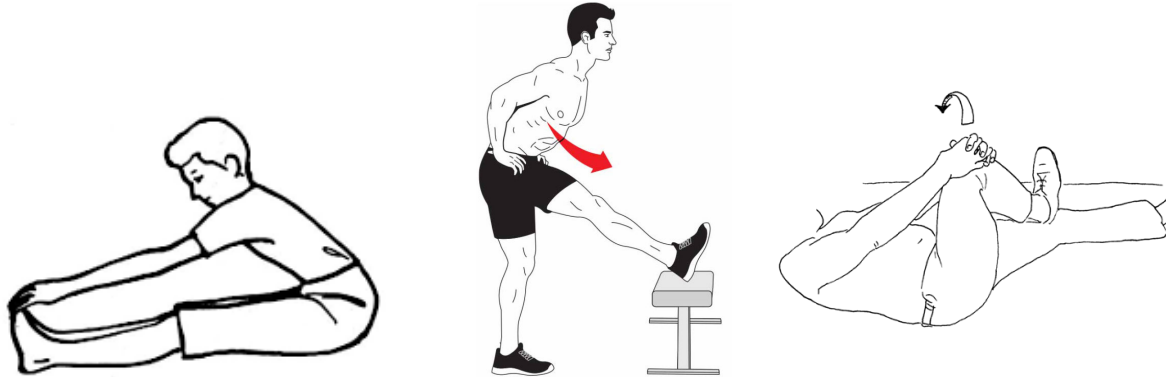
*Important Note: There is a high risk of getting hamstring cramps when doing this exercise. **Do not continue this exercise** if you get recurring hamstring cramps. Like in the previous tip, this is a sign that your sciatica is really bad and you'll likely need special exercises to start out.*





# Tip #5 - Avoid Stretching

One of the most common things we hear in the clinic from our sciatica clients is: *“I’ve been stretching and it helps a little but doesn’t take the problem away.”*



There’s no shortage of sciatica stretches on the Internet and some really *can* create short term relief.

But that’s why it’s misleading. It’s rarely possible to solve a sciatica problem with stretching alone.

Most sciatica problems are a **combination** of a joint, muscle, nerve, posture, and movement problem all happening at the same time.

Stretching tends to only help the muscle problem while making the nerve problem worse.

Instead try lying on your side and bringing your knees to your chest. Pull your knees into your body as best as you can and hold it for 1-2 minutes. Repeat for 5-10 minutes or longer to find sciatica relief.

# Tip #6 - Avoid Massages

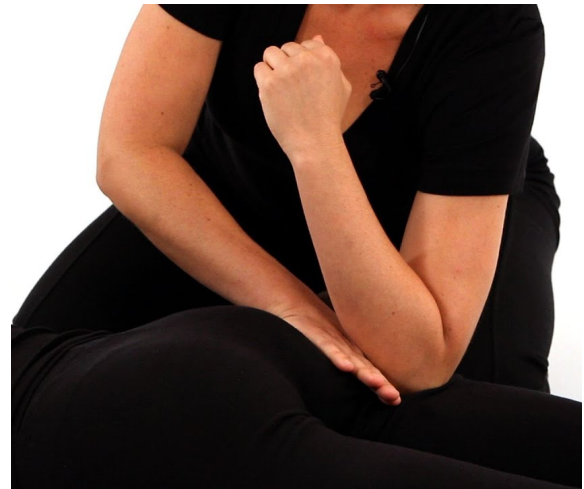
True sciatica is a nerve problem and aggravated nerves do not respond well to forceful pressure.

That's why you hear about pinched nerves being a problem - nerves **don't** like pressure.

Massage is great for stiff muscles.

Where it gets confusing is when people with sciatica also have stiff muscles.

So, it makes sense to rub out those stiff muscles to get some relief. The problem with that is that pressure from massages will keep an aggravated nerve aggravated for even longer.



Some people self-massage using a tennis ball, lacrosse ball, foam roller or other rolling pin type device. Other people go get massaged by a loved one or a professional masseuse.

Be aware that it is possible to feel really good from a massage but if your sciatica problem doesn't go away then you might be aggravating the nerve and missing the real root of your sciatica problem.

# Tip #7 - Keep Moving

A huge mistake when it comes to sciatica is to “take it easy” and “rest it off.”



This tends to make the irritation go down and feel much better but once you get back to your usual activities, the sciatica problem can flare up again.

The real root of your sciatica problem was never addressed and has the potential to get worse the longer its unresolved.

Of course, moving too much might be painful for you. I’m not saying to keep moving even though it hurts. Do what you can **without** irritating your sciatica problem more.

Try to keep up with basic chores, attempt to walk your usual amount, proceed with being on your feet and take breaks as you need to.

Many times, sciatica cases will improve a bit (and more importantly, not worsen) if you can keep up some sort of routine.

# Tip #8 - Avoid Pain Medications

Pain medications have their place and time when dealing with sciatica. Since sciatica is not a life-threatening condition, it's rare that medication is required in order to treat the problem.



Most people with sciatica just find it convenient and easy to use over the counter pain medication to “take the edge off” so that they can sleep or get through the day with the pain.

What's important to highlight here is that **there is no such thing as a medication that will “cure” sciatica**. Even injections are not a “cure” for sciatica. They simply dull the pain for a period of time. That's it. Nothing more.

For some, pain medications might make a huge difference in their pain. Those are the ones I'm most concerned about because they have the highest risk of taking medications for too long and running into terrible side effects on their ligaments, joints, kidneys, liver, and stomach.

We hear from clients about addiction and psychological side effects in addition to the other side effects I've mentioned. Pain medication really is a miracle, but you've got to be careful when choosing to use it.

*\*Disclaimer: I am Doctor of Physical Therapy and not a Doctor of Medicine, so it's out of my scope to make any specific recommendations to you about what and how to take medications. Talk to your physician to get specific advice about over the counter and prescription drugs for your condition.*

# Tip #9 - Avoid Sitting in Hard Chairs

9 out of 10 people with sciatica have pain near and around the **tailbone area**.

When they go to sit, they're likely putting pressure onto an irritated joint, muscle, ligament or the sciatic nerve itself.

Examples of hard seats include restaurant chairs, kitchen chairs, barstools, stadium bleachers, park benches, some cars and many airlines.

It will be a huge help to invest in a small cushion you can take with you in case you encounter a very hard sitting surface.

Some people figure this out really quick because it hurts their sciatic problem as soon as they sit down.

Those that have a high pain tolerance may not notice an increase in pain when sitting on a hard chair. If this is you, try using a cushion or making it a point to sit on softer chairs to relieve your sciatica problem.

This may allow you extend your sitting tolerance and stretch your sleep time!



# Tip #10 - Go to Physical Therapy

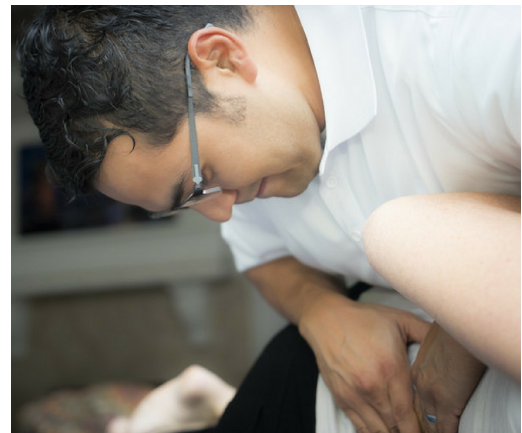
There isn't a faster way to END annoying sciatica pain than by going to see a Physical Therapist.

Getting to see a hands-on specialist Physical Therapist means you're going to get very fast access to care that will soothe those tight muscles, loosen stiff back and hip joints, relieve the sciatica problem and strengthen your body so that you can go back to doing the things that you love.

You can often leave a good Physical Therapist with concerns eased and physical pain reduced within 30-40 minutes.

Combine all of the "tips" in this guide with a trip to see a hands-on Physical Therapist.

You will see a dramatic reduction in your sciatica pain and the stiffness that you are currently suffering from.



# \*Bonus Section\*

## Bonus Tip #1 - Use a Recliner

One of the best positions to be in if you've got sciatica is with your legs supported off the ground and back reclined.



Work to find the best angle and amount of support to take pressure off your tailbone and lower back.

People with severe sciatica cases tend to find that this is the best position to sleep in if they can't sleep on their bed in any position.

**Extra Tip:** Usually the more that the recliner can flatten out the better it can take pressure off the trouble areas!

# Bonus Tip #2 - (Temporarily) Stop Wearing Heels

Wearing high heels forces your entire leg and foot to add more stretch and strain to the sciatic nerve.

They stretch the nerves at the foot and ankle, they force the knees to lock out more, and the lower back joints pinch on the roots of the sciatic nerve.

Due to the change in walking pattern that heels cause the pressure put through your feet can increase up to 25 times!

The body can usually take all this just fine in the absence of sciatica, but it will exacerbate and keep sciatica there longer than it needs to be if you're wearing heels with an unresolved sciatica problem.

Instead try wearing some nice, comfortable and cushiony flat shoes so that you can remove any added stretch and pressure to your nerves.





# Bonus Tip #3 - Stay Hydrated

This is the BIG office worker mistake that could be zapping your energy.

One really simple way to avoid this is to cut out the stuff that makes you dehydrated in the first place.

Things like excessive coffee, tea, alcohol and energy drinks will make you dehydrated as a consequence of drinking too much of them.

Being dehydrated can cause muscle aches, fatigue and dizziness.

It's important that you keep your water intake up in an attempt to ease off any extra or unwanted tension in your lower back, hips, and thighs.

Try to drink 5-7 (20 oz.) full water bottles each day.

Some people prefer to chug it down all at once and some would rather sip it slowly throughout day. Either way works as long as you drink 5-7 water bottles.



# Bonus Tip #4 Avoid Crossing Your Legs

Many people are in a subconscious habit of crossing their legs while they're sitting. They don't even realize they're doing it 90% of the time!



Crossing your legs puts a low-grade stretch on the sciatic nerve causing aggravation and slowing down any sort of recovery.

Many people with desk jobs cross their legs unknowingly while they're very focused on doing their work. Meanwhile their poor sciatic nerve doesn't get any slack and gets more aggravated the longer they keep their legs crossed.

Try sitting with your legs apart instead.

Sitting with legs apart is usually relieving for sciatica. It's the best way to sit if you've got a desk job.

# Virtual Consultation

Did you know you can request a virtual visit with our clinic? Ask questions, get coaching, and receive feedback to make sure you're doing your exercises correctly. You can even discuss your X-rays, MRI, or CT scan with us.

You can meet with me, Dr. David, or with one of our specialists.

**Learn more about how you can schedule your appointment here:**  
**[www.epmanualphysicaltherapy.com/virtual-visit/](http://www.epmanualphysicaltherapy.com/virtual-visit/)**

Hope to talk to you soon!

# Conclusion

I really hope you find the one or two solutions here that helps you get rid of your sciatic pain.

The tips here have been tried and tested by experts and are successfully used to prevent surgeries and help people to stop taking pain medication.

If applied well, they are sure to give you significant relief of your sciatic pain. Keep in mind that these tips are generalized to best fit most people. There's so much more detail and individualization you will get by going through a physical therapy examination.

Don't forget that our YouTube channel is packed with helpful content as well!

Your partner in healthcare,



**Dr. David Middaugh, PT, DPT, FAAOMPT**

**Sciatic Pain Expert**

**Fellowship Trained Manual Therapist**



# Health Advice Disclaimer

We make every effort to ensure that we accurately represent the injury advice and information displayed throughout this guide.

However, examples of injuries and their prognosis are based on typical representations of those injuries that we commonly see in our physical therapy practice. The information given is not intended as representations of every individual's potential injury. As with any injury, each person's symptoms can vary widely and each person's recovery from injury can also vary depending upon background, genetics, previous medical history, application of exercises, posture, motivation to follow advice and various other physical factors.

It is impossible to give a 100% complete accurate diagnosis and prognosis without a thorough physical examination and likewise the advice given for management of an injury cannot be deemed fully accurate in the absence of this examination from El Paso Manual Therapy, PLLC.

We are able to offer you this service at a standard charge. Significant injury risk is possible if you do not follow due diligence and seek suitable professional advice about your injury. No guarantees of specific results are expressly made or implied in this ebook.