

Tips for problem hips

HIP joint pain is a common problem which can be confusing because not only are there many causes but interestingly because most people are unsure as to where their hip joint actually is. True hip joint pain is usually felt in the groin area (where the leg bone attaches to the pelvis) and this needs to be distinguished from upper thigh pain, outer thigh pain, buttock pain or even side pain.

Estelle Mitchell, Chartered Physiotherapist and Musculoskeletal Specialist says: "As with any pain, it is hugely important to have an accurate diagnosis so that appropriate and necessary treatment can be directed at the cause of the problem and not simply at the outcome. Common causes of hip pain may include simple muscle strains around the hip and pelvis through to bursitis, tendonitis and arthritis. There may also be referred pain from lower back problems and sciatic pain which again can come from back problems. Hopefully readers can see how important a full history and a thorough assessment is as without it, patients can only be treated on a trial and error basis. Some simple self help treatments are best to allow any acute inflammation to subside and apply ice to the area, especially the lower back to further reduce inflammation. A packet of frozen peas is ideal as a home-made ice pack but remember to wrap this in a damp tea towel and apply for a maximum of 10 minutes at a time. Anti-inflammatory tablets will also help as of course will a simple pain killer.

Arthritis is a common cause of hip pain, especially osteoarthritis and again, there are self help treatments.

Estelle advises: "I have been advocating glucosamine for a number of years and now that I have found a liquid glucosamine that is

around four times as effective as the same strength tablets, I just had to retail it out of Bodyworks. If patients combine this liquid glucosamine with 400mg of Chondroitin, the difference that some report is quite amazing."

There are many other treatments that are available to, at best, keep patients pain free and at worst, delay the need for a hip replacement. As an example, osteoarthritis is often described as 'wear and tear' arthritis and 'wear and tear' is mainly caused by misalignment of the joints. If this misalignment can be solved by simply wearing prescriptive orthotics (a computer manufactured insole that easily and discreetly slips into your shoes), then the wear and tear can be delayed. This is important as hip replacements wear out in due course so the longer that any replacement is delayed, the less chance of needing further and on-going surgery.

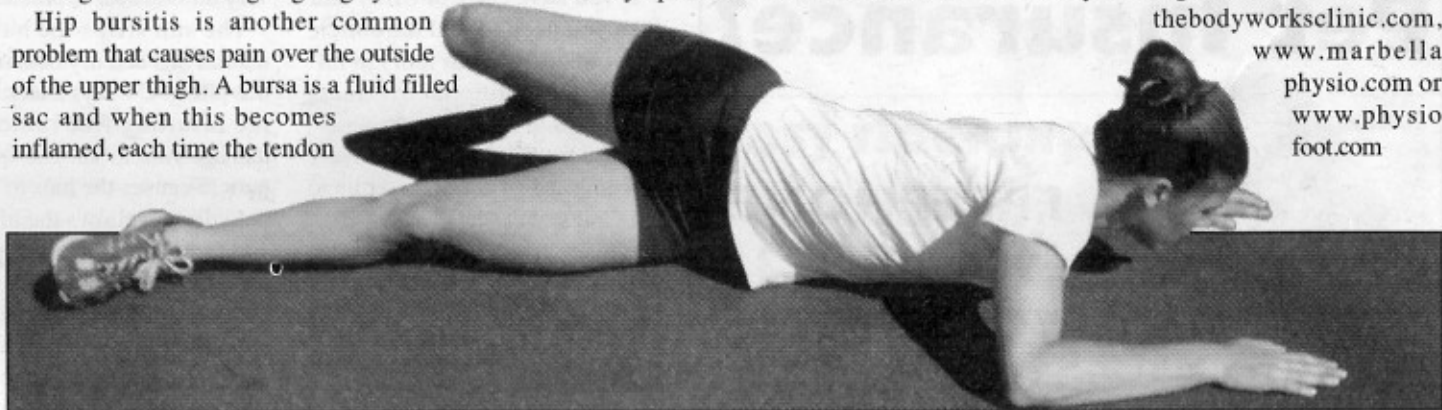
Hip bursitis is another common problem that causes pain over the outside of the upper thigh. A bursa is a fluid filled sac and when this becomes inflamed, each time the tendon

moves over the bone and over this bursa, pain results. Because patients with hip bursitis move this tendon with each step, hip bursitis symptoms can be quite painful. Again ice and rest are very helpful. Hip bursitis very rarely needs surgery and responds well to conservative physiotherapy treatments but as always, a detailed diagnosis is vital. Again and in order to prevent inflammation, orthotics can be prescribed.

Lower back problems can also give referred pain to the hip joint and of course to the sciatic nerve which runs from your lower back. The sciatic nerve is the largest nerve in the body and if irritated, can send pain messages as far down as the foot. Hip pain, or indeed any pain treatment depends entirely on the root cause of the problem. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the cause of the symptoms are understood before

embarking on a treatment programme. Like all pain, careful assessment is necessary but fortunately, there is a multitude of treatments that your Musculoskeletal Specialist can perform. Soft tissue work, gentle mobilisations, cryotherapy (intense therapeutic cold) and electrotherapy are all tools that can be utilised. Correct stretching and the right form of exercise should also be carefully explained and to avoid a recurrence of any back or hip pain, computerised prescriptive orthotics should be discussed.

Remember, pain is not a necessity. To get yourself assessed and treated accurately, professionally and above all, honestly or to learn more, patients may self refer direct to Estelle Mitchell, Biomechanical and Musculoskeletal Specialist and your English Chartered Physiotherapist by calling 952 883 151 or by visiting her websites at: www.thebodyworksclinic.com, www.marbella physio.com or www.physio foot.com



Correct stretching: Can help you avoid hip pain.