

Sweetwater Pain & Spine

Home Exercise Handout

Piriformis Syndrome

Piriformis Syndrome occurs when the piriformis muscle in the buttock compresses or irritates the nearby sciatic nerve, causing pain, numbness, or tingling that may radiate down the leg. The exercises below are designed to stretch the piriformis, strengthen the hip external rotators, and mobilize the sciatic nerve. Performed consistently, they help reduce muscle tightness, decrease nerve irritation, and restore normal function.

1 Supine Figure-4 Piriformis Stretch

Hold 30–45 seconds • 2–3 sets each side • Daily

1



STARTING POSITION

Lie on your back, knees bent, feet flat.

2



FIGURE-4 POSITION

Cross ankle over opposite knee — form a figure-4.

3



GENTLE PRESS (MILD STRETCH)

Gently press the knee away — feel the stretch in the deep buttock.

4



ADVANCED VARIATION (STRONGER STRETCH)

For deeper stretch: draw both legs toward chest. Hold 30–45 seconds. Breathe.

2 Seated Figure-4 Stretch with Forward Lean

1–3 sets • Hold 30 seconds • 1–2 times per day

1



START POSITION

Sit in a chair with your feet flat on the floor. Sit tall with your spine long and shoulders relaxed. Keep both hips level.

2



CROSS INTO FIGURE-4

Cross the ankle of the affected side over the opposite knee. Let the crossed foot hang to the side. Keep your spine tall.

3



FORWARD LEAN

Hinge forward at the hips (do not round your back). Gently press down on the raised knee with your hands. You should feel a deep stretch in the buttock of the raised leg.

4


HOLD
30 SECONDS



HOLD & RETURN

Hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Breathe slowly and relax into it. Sit back up tall. Repeat 3 times.

3 Clamshell (Hip External Rotator Strengthening)

2–3 sets • 12–15 reps per side • 3–5 days per week

1



START POSITION

Lie on your side with knees bent to 45° and feet stacked.

Keep your pelvis perpendicular to the floor.

Engage your core and relax your shoulders.

2



RAISE TOP KNEE

Keeping your feet together, raise your top knee.

This is pure hip external rotation — no rolling your hip or pelvis back.

Hold for 2–3 seconds.

3



LOWER SLOWLY

Lower your top knee back down with control.

Keep your pelvis still and feet together.

Repeat for the prescribed repetitions.

4 Sciatic Nerve Slider (Neural Mobilization)

1–2 sets • 20 repetitions • 1–2 times per day

1



START POSITION

Sit upright on the edge of a chair with both feet flat on the floor.

Sit tall with your spine long and shoulders relaxed.

Keep your core gently engaged.

2



EXTEND & NOD

Straighten the knee of the affected leg while simultaneously dropping your chin to your chest.

You should feel a mild pulling sensation behind the knee.

3



REVERSE & LOOK UP

Immediately reverse the movement: bend your knee back in and extend your neck (look up).

Return to the starting position smoothly.

4

REPEAT
20 TIMES



REPEAT RHYTHMICALLY

Perform 20 repetitions in a fluid, oscillating motion.

Use a slow, controlled rhythm. A mild pulling sensation behind

■ Stop any exercise that causes sharp pain, new numbness or weakness, or worsening of symptoms, and contact our office. These exercises supplement but do not replace your provider's individualized plan.

Questions or concerns? Call Sweetwater Pain & Spine: (775) 870-1480

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