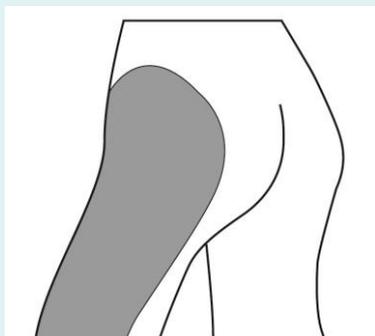


Your guide to lateral hip pain

Information for patients, service users and carers

Area of pain:



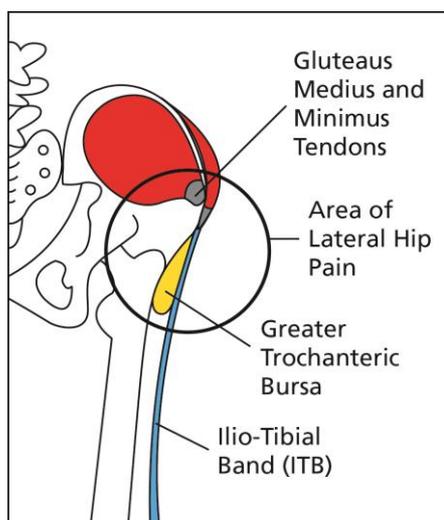
What is lateral hip pain?

Lateral hip pain is pain around the outside of your hip joint.

What causes lateral hip pain?

Lying over the top of the tendons around your hip is a thick strip of connective tissue called the Iliotibial Band (ITB). See the diagram below.

The ITB works a bit like an elastic band, if it is stretched the tension can cause it to squash or compress the tendons beneath it.



If this happens repeatedly the tendon underneath will start to swell, which can cause pain and changes in the tendon.

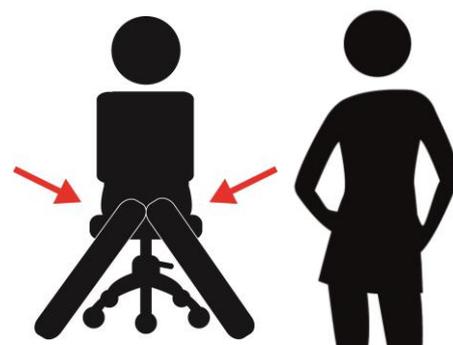
In some cases, the fluid filled cushion between the bone and tendon (bursa) can become swollen too, this is known as trochanteric bursitis. However this is very rarely the cause of symptoms.

The most common cause of over stretching the ITB is a repeated movement called hip adduction. This is the movement when crossing your legs or when standing with one side of your hip dropping to the floor (hip hang).

Having weak gluteal muscles (the muscles around your buttock and the outside of your hip) can also increase the tension in the ITB as it has to work harder to keep your pelvis stable when you are standing and walking.

Everyday positions which can cause pain:

- Standing in a hip hang position
- Carrying a baby on your hip
- Sleeping on your side with your top knee lower than your hip
- Sitting with your legs crossed
- Sitting with your feet wide and knees together, and getting up from this position
- Sitting on very low chairs regularly



You are more likely to get lateral hip pain if you:

- Are a woman aged 40 – 60
- Have osteoarthritis in the hip or lower back
- Have one leg shorter than the other
- Have a scoliosis
- Have had a sudden increase in exercise and have weak gluteal muscles

What are the symptoms?

You may feel pain and tenderness around the outside of your hip and thigh and/or around your buttocks.

You may also experience pain...

- When standing, especially on one leg
- When sitting, especially if you are sitting with your legs crossed or feet tucked underneath you
- When walking, especially up hills or stairs
- At night, especially when lying on your side
- When getting in and out of a car or a bath

Top tip: Next time you stand up; check to see if your knees drift together. They should always stay in line with your hips and feet.

What can I do to help the pain settle?

Try to remove all compression from your hip by improving your posture. Here are some solutions to help you recover:

Walking: Try using a walking stick/ or poles and take regular breaks.

Standing: Make sure you're standing with your feet hip width apart and balance your weight equally on both sides.

Use a stick or a worktop to support you or try perching on a stool.

Carry a baby in front not on your hip.

Sitting: Avoid crossing your legs. Instead try keeping your hips, knees and feet aligned.

Your knees need to be lower than your hips; you can get a wedge cushion to help with this.

If your feet don't reach the floor, try using a foot stool so you aren't sitting on the edge of the seat.

Sitting to standing: Try not to let your knees drift together when standing or sitting down. Remember keep your hips, knees and feet aligned.

Stairs: Take your time and use the hand rail to help you up and down the stairs.

Sleeping: Lie on your non-painful side and rest your top leg on a pillow alongside your body.

Using an eggshell mattress topper can help ease the pressure when lying on the painful side.

Do I need to see a physiotherapist?

If you are still experiencing pain after following the advice in this guide you may need to see a physiotherapist who will task you with exercises that are suited to you and will help strengthen your hip muscles.

How long will it take to recover?

Using the information in this guide can help you to recover, but remember it's not always a quick process.

If your symptoms are mild and you have not been experiencing pain for very long, your recovery may only take a few weeks.

If you have been experiencing pain for months or even longer, you are likely to see an improvement by following the advice in this leaflet but full recovery can take months.

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