

Lateral Hip Pain 'Greater Trochanteric Pain Syndrome'

Patients with greater trochanteric pain syndrome (GTPS) usually complain of pain at the side of the hip radiating down the side of the thigh and sometimes below the knee.



- Greater trochanteric pain syndrome – (GTPS) is a common clinical syndrome that used to be called trochanteric bursitis.
- It is more common in females F:M = 4:1
- More common in 40-60 year old patients
- Occurs in 10-25% of the population
- Occurs in 35% of patients with low back pain

People with GTPS often have lots of questions, below are some of the commonly asked questions. Also some tips and tricks to help manage your GTPS.

• What did we previously think caused the pain?

It was thought the pain was caused by inflammation of the sacs of fluid (bursa) around the hip tendons.

• What does research now tell us is likely causing the pain?

GTPS is caused by age related changes in the tendons of the muscles around the hip as they insert on to the bone. These muscles are called gluteal muscles (buttock muscles).

• “What caused it ?”

There are lots of reasons why this may have happened.

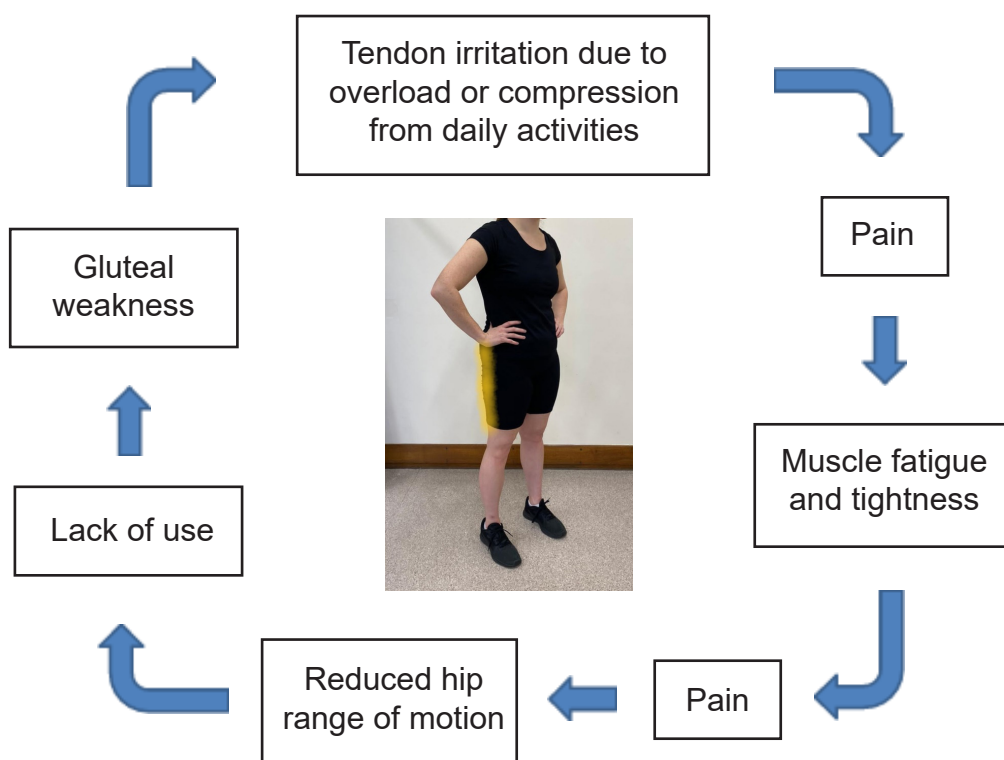
You may have “asked” the muscles to do too much and they are not strong enough to cope with that demand. This can be due to over exercising or under exercising.

The tendons are repeatedly compressed by the positions we adopt during daily life causing micro trauma to the tendon over time.

• What happens next?

This overload or compression irritates the tendon causing the muscles around the hip to become stiff or tight and tender to touch. This can often refer pain down the leg.

The muscles become weaker as we use them less due to pain and so the cycle continues.



Positions during daily life that can compress the tendons

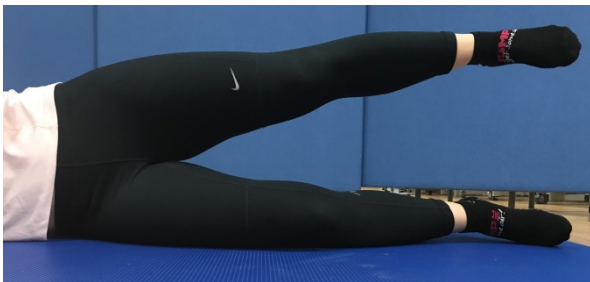
These positions that we often use can cause stress and strain to the tendons over time. Avoiding these positions can reduce your symptoms.



How can I ease my pain?

- Exercise to help strengthen the hip muscles is the best way to reduce your symptoms and prevent recurrence.
- Injections may offer temporary relief only but does not address the underlying cause.
- Avoid aggravating positions or activities that may induce compression on the tendons.
- Try some massage around the hip muscles - if you lay on your side with the affected hip on top - see if someone can massage around the tender area. This will be quite tender initially but will ease with time.

Exercises to try



This static hold will help activate the hip muscles required to support your pelvis alignment and help decrease pain.

Side leg lift and hold

Stack your hips directly on top of each other.
Lift your leg up to hip height.
Don't let your hip hitch up.
Relax your foot.

Hold for 1 minute.

Repeat 2-3 times.

It should feel achy after the exercise around your hip bone.



Single leg balance

Try to keep your shoulders level.
Don't lean to the side.
Keep your pelvis level and don't let it drop.
Stand on your affected leg and keep your foot under your shoulder.
Hold on to the wall if required so that you can feel the exercise working in the side of your hip on your standing leg.

Hold for 30 seconds
Repeat 2-3 times.



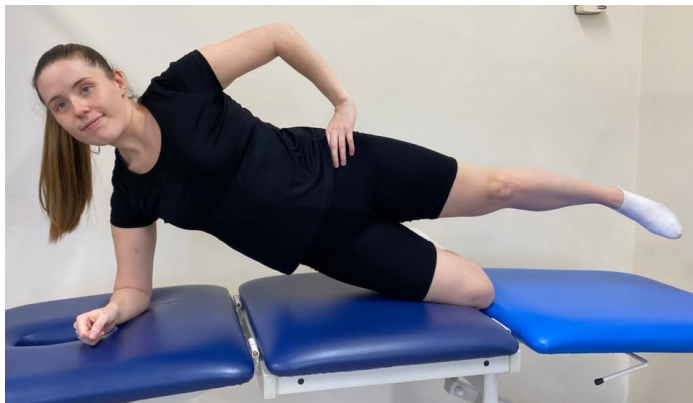
Step ups

Put your affected leg on the step.
Keep your knee pointing forwards over your toes, don't let it fall inwards as you step up and down.
Push up slowly through your affected leg.
Leave your affected leg on the step, slowly place your non-affected foot back on the floor.
Do not bend and jump/push off your back leg.

Repeat 8-12 times.
You should feel the muscles around your hip and thigh working during the exercises, and these may ache after the exercise.

Advanced exercise

Only try these when you have mastered the others



Side plank with hip abduction

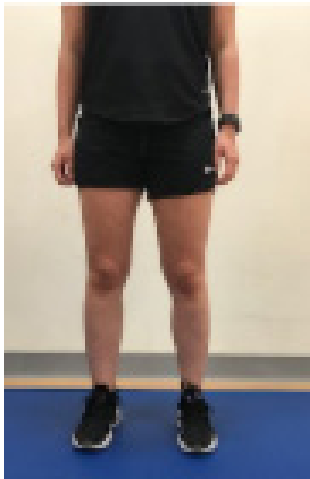
Push the hip off the bed, using the muscles on the bottom hip.
Lift your top leg to hip height.
This exercise needs to be done on both sides.

Start with 30 second holds.
Repeat 2-3 times.



Avoiding aggravating positions

Lie with the painful side up and place a pillow between the thighs and knee or lie on your back with a pillow between your legs /knees .



Standing posture

Avoid standing with your weight loaded through one leg, instead stand with legs hip width apart, with equal weight through both legs.

Web address: <http://www.cht.nhs.uk/services/clinical-services/physiotherapy-outpatients/patient-careinformation/>

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