

Lateral Hip Pain

It is an injury of the tendon of gluteus medius, a major hip stabiliser. It can be thought of as like a tennis elbow problem affecting the gluteus medius tendon. Tendinopathy is a failed healing response in the tendon.

What is the cause ?

It is caused by dropout of some of the tendon fibres, and irritation of the remaining fibres. The pain comes from chemical messengers in damaged tendon.

Signs and symptoms?

Pain – over the outside of the hip, especially with walking but also lying in bed on the affected side. Decreased ability to walk for long periods, or climb stairs or hills. Tenderness – over the greater trochanter (a prominence at the top of the femur or thigh bone).

Treatment/Management

- Pain relief – simply painkillers like paracetamol or anti-inflammatory tablets are often helpful.
- Ice massage or Voltaren emulgel applied over the affected area can sometimes help.
- Avoidance of prolonged walking or lots of stairs is usually useful.
- The mainstay of treatment is a series of progressive strengthening exercises to build up the gluteus medius and other pelvic stabiliser muscles. These are started under the supervision of an experienced physiotherapist, and then you continue them at home.
- Occasionally a cortisone injection can be helpful. To get the full benefit from the injection, you need to do the physiotherapy exercises to build up the stabiliser muscles

Don't:

- Sit with your legs crossed
- Sit in chairs/lounges that cause your hips to be lower than your knees
- Sleep on the sore side
- Sleep on the good side **without** a big pillow between your legs
- Hip stand – standing on one leg with your hip poking out to the side
- Aggravate the sore side with extra pressure, eg. Carrying children on that hip or lying on the sore side
- Stretch the ITB, The Iliotibial Band

Do:

- When sitting try to keep your feet and knees shoulder width apart
- When sitting try to sit in chairs/lounges that allow your hips to be level with or slightly higher than your knees
- When sleeping, sleep on your back with the knees bent, supported by a long thick pillow. This allows your knees to roll outwards
- If you sleep on your good side, place a thick pillow between your legs. This stops the top sore leg from crossing the mid line of the body
- Your exercises every day! Be persistent and consistent. Slow controlled activation in the mid-range.

Call Armadale Central Physio on 9399 5020 for assessment and treatment options