

ASK YOUR PHYSICAL THERAPIST

Why Do I Have Pain In My Back And Leg That Feels Worse In The AM When Getting Out Of Bed and After Sitting?

Often times, Low back and Leg pain that is worse in the morning as you get out of bed and after getting up from a seated position is the result of a herniated disc in the lower spine. Usually, pain that is associated with disc herniation is also resolved or decreased by standing, walking and bending backward at the waist.

What exactly is a herniated disc?

Discs are circular rings of strong connective tissue with fluid in the center of the disc. These discs are between each of the bones that make up the bony part of your spine. The discs provide the spine with cushioning and shock absorption during any upright activity.

So why do I have pain when getting out of bed in the am and getting up from a seated position?

As I mentioned earlier, the discs have fluid internally at the center to assist with shock absorption. The disc is thinner/weaker at its back / outside area. Think of the disc like a ketchup packet, if you squeeze the ketchup packet together at one end, all the ketchup goes to the other end. If enough pressure is applied to the ketchup packet on one end, the ketchup squirts out the opposite end of the packet. The discs function just like the ketchup packet. If you spend too much time sitting or you lift an object with improper lifting technique (bending at the waist instead of the knees) the disc pushes against the back outside portion of the disc. This creates a bulge or a tear in the disc, which presses on or near the nerve. This nerve pressure is responsible for the pain down your leg. When you lie down to sleep at night or sit for any prolonged period, fluid returns to the disc causing it to take up space near the irritated nerve thus causing an increase in pain. Movement on the other hand, reduces the amt of fluid in the center of the disc and thereby

creating less pressure on the nerve. Bending backward at the waist in standing and or from a position lying on your stomach reduces the pressure on the nerve by pinching the back part of the disc and sending the fluid in the disc away from the nerve root. This usually will result in relief of leg and back pain.

In addition, customized strengthening of the back and stomach muscles as well as the leg muscles will work to keep the back and leg pain from returning.

The Physical Therapists at Cardin and Miller Physical Therapy are experts in the treatment of patients with low back and leg pain. **CALL OUR OFFICE TODAY (717-245-0400) TO SCHEDULE YOUR **FREE SCREEN** WITH ONE OF OUR SPECIALISTS** who will help you to get rid of your back and leg pain so that you can return to all of the things that you want and need to do without worrying whether or not you are going to have pain if you try to be more active.

We accept many insurances that allow you to self refer to us without the need for a script from the doctor. This will save you from waiting for extended periods to see your physician as well as avoid surgery and medication -- This will save you time and money.

Steve Miller PT, C.Ped is the owner of Cardin and Miller Physical Therapy. Please contact me with any questions: smiller@cardinmillerpt.com my column appears in the Sentinel's Thrive section biweekly and on-line via Cumberlink.com