

Low-Back Pain

Rick Bittner, D.C.

Of all the maladies I'm presented with, low-back pain stands as the most debilitating and painful of all.

Ninety percent of presenting patients that come to see me have the same problem—the ilium stuck in a flexed position and the corresponding L5 vertebra rotated to that side of pelvic flexion. Simply stated, low-back pain is the most common reason people seek chiropractic care.

Your pelvis, known anatomically as the pelvic girdle, is surrounded by some of the largest muscle groups in the body and accompanied by some of the largest nerves in the body.

Your sciatic nerve, with roots from your third lumbar vertebra to the second sacral segment, innervates most of your legs and all of your feet. It is roughly the size of your out-stretched pinky finger—really big!

The pelvis is truly an amazing and powerful structure. Designed to carry the entire body toward whatever challenge presents itself, the pelvis is ready. With one foot forward and one foot back, you step forward in life. Whether you're writing on a chalkboard, aiming your rifle, or reaching toward your loved ones, the pelvis is truly the anchor from which you physically approach the world.

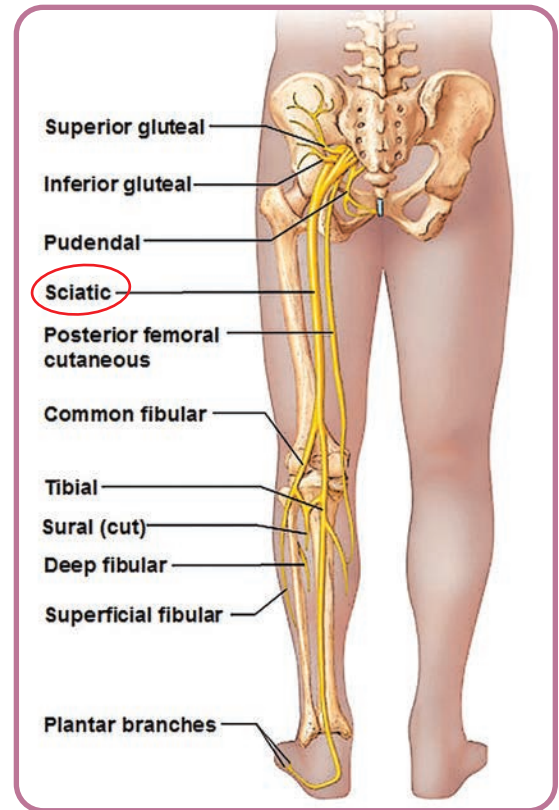
Enter the problem. There are many sources for pelvic misalignment (and thus back pain): bending wrong while turned toward one side or the other, lifting extremely, carrying an infant on one hip for several months, jumping out of the pickup box onto one foot—you name it! The pain can be powerful. Sometimes you can't even find a comfortable position!

At this point, the ilium is typically

pulled into a flexed position. The L5 vertebra is rotated toward the side of flexion and the result is frequently described as having a knife stabbing you right there above your belt line! The para-spinal muscle groups on both sides of the affected vertebra begin to pull against each other. Confused, the muscles continue to pull, causing them to traction and pull against the nerve structures, which is a direct attack on the sciatic nerve—a recipe for pain—often radiating down the affected leg!

At this point, most people reach out to the local emergency room. The typical recommendation is muscle-relaxing drugs and physical therapy. The drugs usually reduce the swelling. The therapy typically returns the patient to a less painful state and returns most of their range of motion. As long as they remain calm and don't re-stress anything, the patient generally begins to recover within a week or two. Or do they?

One of the problems with this course of treatment is that, most often, the underlying pelvic and vertebral structures remain in their incorrect positions. The muscles relax and the stretching relieves the acute pain but the problem, the flexed ilium and rotated vertebra, are never adjusted back into their proper position and the injury usually returns again and again throughout the person's life until the structures fi-



nally fail, requiring surgical intervention.

Your local chiropractor is well trained to adjust the vertebra in your low back and pelvis to return them to their correct position. Our typical care plans usually allow your body to heal itself, often leading to a complete resolution of the problem without drugs or surgery.

Schedule an appointment with your local Chiropractic Physician today. We are allies with you in the future of your health and your health-care. ■

Be Well! —Dr. B



Dr. Rick Bittner is a graduate of Northwestern Health Science University and the owner of Able Chiropractic, located at 2407 W. Main Street, #102, in Bozeman. Call 406-548-8822 for an appointment—or just drop in! Visit: AbleChiro.com or email: theablechiro@gmail.com.