



Pain in the buttocks

Pain in the buttock is a common malady. Of course there are many reasons for having a pain in the buttocks some physical and some mental. I am not even going touch the mental pain in the butt.

Often individuals express the opinion that the onset of buttock, back, and/or leg pain was related to exercise or physical activity, such as running more miles or recent yard work. Buttock pain can occur during or immediately after exercise or physical activity. However in my experience buttock/back pain is more likely related to sitting than exercise or activity.

A classic investigation examined whether Stevedores (guys who loaded trucks) had more back injuries than the guys who drove the trucks. The investigators were surprised to find that the truck drivers who spent most of their time sitting on their butt had far more back injuries than the guys who were constantly bending and lifting heavy objects loading the trucks.

The spine is poorly designed to withstand the sustained stress of sitting. One of the unique anatomical features of the spine is the discs. Discs are special structures located between each bone of the spine. A spinal disc has a central portion, which consists of fluid. The action of sitting can lead to positions of the spine, which can push this fluid in the center of the spinal disc either backwards or sideways depending on the alignment of the spine.

There are very few professional truck drivers, but there are a large number of automobile commuters, and an even larger number of computer drivers. Both of these activities involve a large amount of sitting. Auto driving and computer driving are highly correlated with buttock/back pain and neck pain.

Many times butt/back pain occurs after bending to lift something. Careful history taking often reveals the activity which occurred right before bending to lift something heavy was a bought of prolonged sitting. For example lifting a heavy suite case causes sudden back pain. Frequently the individual lifted the suite case after spending the previous 3 hours driving to the beach in a car. The combination of sitting for prolonged

periods followed by a bending and lifting activity is a common pattern or butt/back pain.

Lopsided car seat

Over the years I have observed a correlation between how old an in car seat is and the development of back, buttock, leg pain.

The drivers' seat in older cars the edge nearest the door compresses and fatigues. This asymmetrical wear and fatigue occurs because the edge of the seat pan nearest the door gets more pressure and wear and tear as we get in and out of the auto. The result is the seat pan it is not level. The side nearest the door will compress and be flatter. Sitting on a lopsided or tilted seat pan of a car can result in one buttock being lower than the other. This is analogous to riding down the road with the tires on the driver side of the car being flatter than the tires on the left side of the car.

If, the left side of the seat pan of the drivers seat is lower than the right side the pelvis will tilt. If the pelvis is tilted the spine will curve. If the left side of the pelvis is lower than the right the spine will curve into a position of relative right side-bend. This places compressive forces on the right side of the spine and tensile or lengthening forces on the left side of the spine. If the right side of the spine is compressed the disc will ooze towards the left side of the spine. If the right side of the spine is compressed it can pinch nerves on the right side of the spine. If the left side of the spine is under excessive tensile or stretching forces it can stretch nerves on the left side of the spine. As you can see if the spine is not straight bad things can happen.

Having a lopsided car seat is relatively easy thing to determine. Look and feel the right side and the left side of the seat pain if, the door side has more wrinkles, and feels softer and thinner when feeling the opposite side the seat pan is not level.

A relatively simple treatment for butt/back pain, which occurs when driving, is to put a small, left under the left sit bone. Either a small towel, pad of paper, or small pillow will level the leaning seat pan. Of course another option is to buy a new car.

If you are a runner with butt/back pain the risky time is not when running, but when sitting in the car after a long run.