



# Solutions for Sciatica & Back Pain



Physical Therapy  
Solutions For Sciatica  
& Back Pain

Electrical Stimulation  
Service Spotlight

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Appointment With  
Kai!

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## PHYSICAL THERAPY SOLUTIONS FOR SCIATICA & BACK PAIN

Are you experiencing pain in your leg or numbness in your foot? Are these symptoms making it difficult for you to go about your daily routine? You could be suffering from sciatica.

Sciatica is often a debilitating condition that is a result of compression or inflammation of the sciatic nerve. The condition most commonly is associated with pain radiating down the leg. It can be so severe that people struggle to do normal activities of daily living. While “sciatica” may sound serious, it’s entirely curable.

Call our clinic today to make an appointment. With guidance from your physical therapist, you can find solutions to your pain and get back to living the life you enjoy!

### How Can You Tell If You Have Sciatica?

Although sciatica is a commonly used term, it may also cause confusion because it is sometimes used to describe any type of back or leg pain. But “true” sciatica refers to pain that radiates downwards from the lower back/buttock region along the course of the nerve into the thigh and lower leg. Symptoms that extend below the knee and into the lower leg and foot are consistent with a true sciatica.

Not all patients have pain. Some patients experience paresthesias (i.e. numbness and tingling) along the sciatic nerve’s path in the leg and foot. For some, the condition may include weakness in the muscles of the foot and lower leg. In serious cases, it can include changes to bowel and bladder function.

While sciatica pain can be intense, it is treatable. For a lot of people, physical therapy can help to resolve sciatica without operation — often within just a few weeks. Even if you’ve suffered severe sciatica spawned from leg weakness, bladder changes or nerve issues, there’s still hope.

### What Causes Sciatica?

In most cases, sciatica is caused by a herniated lumbar disc where the nerve root is irritated by disc material that has ruptured. Recent evidence suggests that sciatica is not because of “compression” but a combination of pressure, inflammation and immune system defenses.

In most cases, a physical therapist can help to identify what is causing the condition and how to successfully resolve it. The combination of education and activity modification can help set the stage for a successful outcome.

### The Most Common Symptoms of Sciatica

Sciatica back pain is normally noticed as a pain radiating from the lower back/buttock down the leg below the knee and sometimes into the foot. The dominance of leg pain (more than back pain) is a classic characteristic of sciatica. The location of the leg pain (i.e. outer calf or back of calf); paraesthesia (i.e. numbness and/or tingling) or loss of sensation, along with weakness and/or reflex changes are all indications of sciatica. Another clear sign is increased leg pain with coughing, sneezing and/or taking a deep breath. If sciatica isn’t treated, it can hinder mobility altogether.

# HOW PHYSICAL THERAPY CAN HELP WITH SCIATICA

If you're experiencing sciatica, contact a physical therapist immediately. Your physical therapist will perform a thorough physical examination and based on the findings provide you with solutions that work.

## Education

Understanding exactly what sciatica is and how to manage it can help you be proactive and find a solution for your sciatica. Your therapist knows the solutions that work. Understanding what is going on, and more importantly, what you can do about it, has been shown to be one of the most effective solutions. It seems small but consistently it has been shown to help!

## Advice to stay active

It is especially important to stay active early, despite the intensity of the pain that can be associated with sciatica. We know that rest is not an effective solution. Your physical therapist can help you identify modifications to painful tasks and help you be safe and active.

## Exercise therapy

Supervised exercises are vital to a successful outcome. A physical therapist will tailor your exercises, monitor you and progress you based on your individual needs. Supervised exercise therapy includes directional exercises, proper postural exercises, nerve mobilization, or strength exercises. The McKenzie Method is a technique that has been shown to be effective in identifying movements and



positions to provide you with relief and is often used for home exercises.

## Spinal manual therapy

Physical therapists often use spinal manual therapy for their patients with sciatica. Manual therapies include a variety of techniques that move one or more joints within normal ranges of motion with the aim of improving spinal joint motion or function. It can also include soft tissue techniques that help to alleviate pain and allow for more mobility and improved function.

## Call Our Clinic Today

These treatments, hand-picked by professionals, can completely eliminate sciatica over time. If you're experiencing back pain, don't wait. Call one of our physical therapists today and schedule your first appointment to have your condition assessed and your back pain treated, once and for all.

Sources: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK507908/> • <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33017565/> • <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S183695520200229?via=ihI> • <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S183695520200229?via=ihI> • <https://www.bmj.com/content/367/bmj.l6273> • <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29602304/>

# HOLIDAY RECIPE: CUT-OUT SUGAR COOKIES

## COOKIE DOUGH

- 3 c all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1 c (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 c granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 tbsp. milk
- 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract

## FROSTING

- 1 c (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
- 5 c confectioners' sugar
- 1/4 c heavy cream
- 1/2 tsp pure almond extract
- 1/4 tsp kosher salt
- Food coloring, for decorating

**Directions:** In a large bowl, whisk flour, baking powder, and salt until combined. In another large bowl, using a handheld mixer on medium-high speed, beat butter and sugar until fluffy and pale in color. Add egg, milk, and vanilla and beat until combined. Gradually add dry ingredients and beat on medium-low speed until combined and no dry streaks remain. On a clean work surface, shape into a disk and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate 1 hour. Preheat oven to 350°. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough to 1/8" thick. Cut out shapes and transfer to 2 parchment-lined baking sheets. Freeze 10 minutes (so your shapes hold while baking!). Bake cookies until edges are lightly golden, 8 to 10 minutes. In a large bowl, using handheld mixer on medium-high speed, beat butter until smooth, then add confectioners' sugar and beat until no lumps remain. Add cream, almond extract, and salt and beat until combined. Bake cookies until edges are lightly golden, 8 to 10 minutes. Let cool. Frost and decorate cookies as desired.



# ELECTRICAL STIMULATION

## Service Spotlight

While it may sound a bit intimidating, electrical stimulation really isn't at all! When used correctly and provided under the guidance of a licensed and skilled physical therapist, electrical stimulation is a safe and efficacious modality that can be used to treat a variety of conditions.

While individual units and modes of delivery can vary, the standard electrical stimulation device utilizes self-adhesive electrodes placed around the target treatment area on the body. These electrodes are connected via wire leads to the unit, through which electricity can pass and ultimately interact with sensory and/or motor nerves (depending on the type of current utilized).

Pain control and reduction is probably the most frequent indication of electrical stimulation usage. Specifically, this modality can trigger an innate and completely natural analgesic effect by stimulating specific sensory nerve fibers (including A-beta, A-delta, and C fibers) which both disrupt or decrease the sensation of pain and also elicit the release of certain neurotransmitters which can prolong the pain-relieving effects.

### Does electrical muscle stimulation hurt?

No! The intensity of the electrical muscle stimulation or sensory nerve stimulation is easily modifiable and ultimately will only be as much as you, the patient, can tolerate. Typically, electrostimulation will feel tingly or prickly (some patients describe it as a comforting "pins and needles" sensation). Sometimes, as in the case when used for muscle strengthening, the intensity level can be high and somewhat uncomfortable, but it should never cause pain.

### Expect great results with electrical stimulation!

Are you interested in trying electrical stimulation? Wondering if it can help your pain or dysfunction? Our physical therapy services, including electrostimulation and other modalities, are evidence-based, state-of-the-art, effective, and have minimal to no risk of side effects. Come experience the difference and contact us today to schedule an initial appointment.

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# BOOK YOUR APPOINTMENT WITH KAI!

## Kai Turner, PT

Kai is an Idaho native having been born in Burley, Idaho before moving to the Boise/Meridian area in 2005. Kai attended Mountain View High School where he played multiple sports including football, basketball, and baseball.

Kai then attended Eastern Oregon University in La Grande, Oregon where he played football and received his Bachelor's Degree in Exercise Science. Following his undergraduate education, Kai attended Idaho State University where he received his Doctorate of Physical Therapy in May of 2022.

Kai specializes in working with the athlete/weekend warrior as he has 3.5 years of experience as a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist at OFFTHEFIELD, actively participates in a number of sports and activities, and enjoys furthering his knowledge in the treatment of sports injuries.

Kai wants to help you get back to doing the things you love most and to make sure you are able to perform at the best of your abilities.

In Kai's free time, he enjoys training in Olympic Weightlifting, golfing with friends (or taking practice swings in the living room), and hanging out with his girlfriend and their dog.

# SCIATICA? WE CAN HELP!

Don't put off getting rid of your pain any longer. We work with patients regularly suffering from sciatica from various causes. Scan the QR code to learn more about how we can help your sciatica. Call and get an appointment today.



*Ready to take your health to the next level? Call us today.*

**Meridian: 208.742.4023 | Boise: 208.273.8950**