

PhysioBiz

Health newflashes

for bodies busy moving, working, playing, being.



Hip hip hooray!

Welcome to PhysioBiz, with healthcare advice and information you can trust and rely on, brought to you by the South African Society of Physiotherapy!

Which part of your body do you take for granted? Every little bit of you works so miraculously – your fingers and wrists, complex little structures that enable you to do so much, your ankles, your shoulders – and you only realise how important they are when they fail you.

One private piece of body territory which goes unnoticed is the pelvis and hip. Only when smitten with lower back pain do many people realise just how complex this section of us is, a part which links spine, pelvis and hips. “The sacro-iliac joint (SIJ) is a deep joint that sits on either side of your sacrum (tail bone) and can be involved in lower back pain,” says Rogier van Bever Donker, deputy president of the South African Society of Physiotherapy (SASP).

Surrounded by some of the strongest muscles, the SIJ, as they’re called, transmit forces from the upper body to the lower body and provide cushioning for the spine. When they are injured, their yell for help is loud and clear: pain in the lower back or buttocks. This pain may radiate out into the hips, groin or the thigh. Pain may get worse from sitting, standing, lying down, or climbing stairs. It may be worse with transitional movements (going from sitting to standing).

Causes of sacroiliac pain:

The SIJ itself actually has no direct connection to muscles, but it has a lot of ligaments which can become painful if they become either too loose or too tight. This can result from:

- Pregnancy
- A fall
- A work injury or car accident
- Degenerative disorders like ankylosing spondylitis
- Cumulative injuries from activities such as lifting or running
- Aging

“Sacroiliac syndrome is something most physiotherapists see regularly; it can be involved in many lower back pain cases and can be quite disabling,” says Van Bever Donker. “You may need to see a doctor for anti-inflammatory medication in the very early stages when the pain is bad, but at the same time, you should be seeing an experienced physiotherapist. He or she will not only be able to give you a diagnosis using a range of hands-on tests, but they can also immediately use mobilisations, manipulations and exercise to make you move better and reduce pain.”

As an expert in ensuring the body remains functional, happy and healthy, the physiotherapist can also prescribe exercises to do at home – some of them amazingly tiny movements – which help to strengthen and stabilise this important physical structure. These, combined with some advice on activities of daily living, and importantly, ergonomic advice (which chairs to use at work, computer screen levels, how to lift without strain and more) can help you stave off another episode of this pain in future.

For more information, or to find a physiotherapist, go to www.saphysio.co.za