

Greater trochanteric pain syndrome

You have been diagnosed with greater trochanteric pain syndrome (GTPS). This information explains what GTPS is, and how it can be managed. If you have any questions, please speak to a physiotherapist caring for you.

What is GTPS?

GTPS is a painful condition, affecting the outer thigh and hip area.

It happens when the tissues that lie over the bone at the top of the thigh (greater trochanter) become irritated. These tissues can include tendons, muscles or fluid-filled sacs (bursae) that help smooth movement between muscles, tendons and the hip bone.

This irritation might happen for a number of reasons, but it is most often due to overload. The structures cannot cope with the strain being put on them.

You will usually not need scans to diagnose GTPS. It is diagnosed through taking a medical history, and doing specific tests of the hip during a physical examination.

Symptoms of GTPS

- Pain in your outer thigh and hip area. This might feel like an aching or burning pain.
- The pain might be worse when you are lying on your side, especially at night.
- The pain might be worse with exercise.
- You might walk with a limp.

Cause of GTPS

GTPS is most common in adult women. The exact cause is not fully understood. There are many factors that can contribute to it.

- A direct fall on the outside edge of your hip.
- Excessive load, for example prolonged walking or running. Poor running style can also lead to increased load on this area of the hip.
- Prolonged or excessive pressure to your hip area can make GTPS worse. For example, sleeping on your affected side.
- Weakness of the muscles surrounding the hip.

Managing symptoms

To help symptoms in the short-term, you can try the following.

- Do less aggravating activities, such as running or excessive walking.
- When you are standing still, avoid leaning on one hip. Keep your weight evenly spread through both feet.
- Do not sleep on the aggravated side. If sleeping on the opposite hip, try placing a pillow between your knees to stop your painful leg crossing over.
- Do not sit with your legs crossed.
- Losing weight can help with the symptoms.
- You can use painkillers for short-term pain relief.

Exercises for GTPS

Exercises to strengthen the hip area will help healing and return to activity. Please see below for exercises to complete in the early and later stages of rehabilitation. Your physiotherapist might show you other exercises to do.

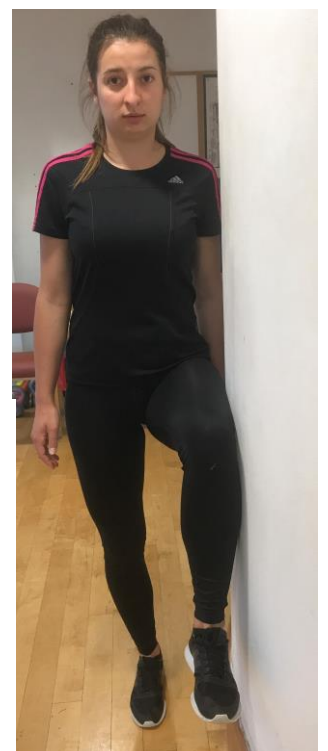
You will need to follow the instructions and monitor how you do these exercises carefully. These exercises are needed to help recovery, but overloading the area might make your pain worse. If you have any questions or concerns, speak to your physiotherapist.

Exercises for early stages



- 1 Stand holding on to a stable surface, such as a chair or table, for balance.
- 2 Lift your painful leg out to the side, and then slowly lower it back to the standing position.
- 3 Do this 10 to 12 times.
- 4 Try to repeat this exercise 3 times.

- 1 Stand with the side of your body touching a wall. **Make sure your painful leg is away from the wall.**
- 2 Lift your unaffected leg (closest to the wall) up to 90 degrees with your knee bent, as shown in the photo.
- 3 Push against the wall with this knee. You should feel the muscles around the edge of your outside hip working.
- 4 Hold this position for 20 to 30 seconds.
- 5 Rest, and then repeat this exercise 3 times.





- 1 Lie on your unaffected side, with a pillow between your knees.
- 2 Make sure your top leg is in line with your body.
- 3 Lift the leg up towards the ceiling, and slowly lower back to the starting position.
- 4 Do this 10 to 12 times.
- 5 Repeat this exercise 3 times.

Exercises for later stages



- 1 Lie on your side, with your painful leg towards the floor.
- 2 Bend your knees behind you.
- 3 Push up on your elbow, lifting your hips up so they are in line with your body.
- 4 Hold this position for 20 to 30 seconds.
- 5 Rest, and then repeat this exercise 3 times.



To make this exercise harder, do this exercise with your knees straight (see photo B).



- 1 Put a resistance band around your ankles.
- 2 Stand in a mini squat position.
- 3 Take 10 slow and controlled steps to the left, and then 10 steps to the right. **Make sure you stay in a squat position.**
- 4 Repeat this exercise 3 times.



- 1 Using your painful leg, step up and then slowly step down from the bottom step of the stairs. Do not use the handrail for support.
- 2 Do this 10 to 12 times.
- 3 Repeat this exercise 3 times.

How long does it take to get better?

Everybody will improve differently. For most people it will take 6 to 9 months of rehabilitation to make a return to full activities without pain.

It is normal to have some periods of increased pain, or flare-ups, during your recovery. If this happens, you might need to reduce your exercises until the pain returns to previous levels.

If your symptoms do not improve in 6 to 9 months, even when you have been completing an appropriate exercise programme, other treatment options can be considered. This includes injections, which you can talk to your physiotherapist about.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, contact the physiotherapy department,
phone 020 7188 5094 Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.00pm

For more information on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, visit **web** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or contact our helpline, **phone** 020 7188 8748 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

phone 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **email** pals@gstt.nhs.uk
phone 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **email** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch, **phone** 020 7188 8815 **email** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day, **phone** 111

NHS website

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health, **web** www.nhs.uk

Leaflet number: 4610/VER2

Date published: October 2021

Review date: October 2024

© 2021 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust
A list of sources is available on request