

# Greater Trochanteric Pain Syndrome (GTPS)

## Patient Information

MSK Physiotherapy Service



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<https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets> or scan the QR code.

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## Introduction

Greater Trochanteric Pain Syndrome (GTPS) refers to discomfort to the outer side of the hip. It can also be referred to as 'Gluteal Tendinopathy'. This leaflet includes information on what GTPS is and ways in which you can reduce and manage your symptoms.



## What is GTPS pain?

GTPS is a common condition which involves pain to the outer side of your thigh / buttock. This can occur due to progressive irritation or injury to the soft tissues that are positioned on the lateral hip.

Previously this condition was often referred to as 'Trochanteric bursitis' as it was thought that inflammation of the lateral hip bursa (fluid filled sac) was the main source of irritation. Nowadays we know this is only relevant in a small number of cases and predominantly, the discomfort is related to repetitive irritation to the tendons of the buttock muscles.

## Who is most likely to develop GTPS?

- Up to 75% are female
- Aged between 40-60 years old
- Overweight - Body Mass Index (BMI)  $>28.5$
- 20-30% will also have lower back pain

## What are the symptoms of GTPS?

Pain local to the outer side of the hip / thigh / buttock. Usually this is described as an 'aching' but patients can often experience 'sharp' sudden onset of discomfort.

This pain can be aggravated by any of the following:

- Walking
- Sitting with legs crossed
- Lying on your side
- Standing for long periods
- When standing from a seated position
- Ascending stairs or walking uphill
- Actively moving your leg outwards against resistance

## What are the causes of GTPS?

Reasons for developing GTPS will vary from person to person. Often a combination of the following may contribute:

- Injury to the outer side of your hip
- Being overweight
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Morphology (shape) of your pelvis
- Sudden increase in physical activity levels
- Repetitive:
  - Crossing legs
  - Standing for long periods with weight through one leg
  - Sitting in low chairs
  - Physical activities, e.g. running or jumping
- Reduced strength of the muscles around your hip
- Lower back pain may contribute to developing lateral hip pain
- Oestrogen deficiency

## How to manage GTPS symptoms

Whilst lateral hip pain symptoms can persist for quite some time, a large percentage will see reduction of symptoms within 1 year. In some cases, this can be longer.

Initially, focus should centre around reducing pain and aggravation:

- Pain relief via guidance from your General Practitioner (GP) or Pharmacist
- Modifying day-to-day activities to reduce aggravation
  - Avoid lying on affected side
  - Avoid crossing legs whilst sitting
  - Avoid activities which may irritate your symptoms such as running or long walks
  - Avoid leaning on one hip whilst standing

Following this:

- Exercises to strengthen the muscles around your hip
- Maintaining a healthy body weight
- Addressing any other health conditions

In some cases which do not get better with time, other interventions such as Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy, Corticosteroid or Platelet-Rich-Plasma injections may be recommended. This may be offered following assessment with a member of a Consultant Orthopaedic team.

## Pain management

- Try to remain active however avoid activities which may aggravate your GTPS pain
- Discuss with your employer any modifications that may be required to continue your normal duties
- Heat or ice (wrapped in a towel) can help to ease your symptoms

You can find further information on medications you can use to reduce your symptoms here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/paracetamol-for-adults/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/ibuprofen-for-adults/>

## How to improve sleep with GTPS

Sleeping positions can irritate your symptoms if you lie directly on the bony prominence located to the outer side of your hip.

Alternatively, you can try:

- Lying on the opposite side
- On your front or back

If you struggle to sleep without lying on your affected side, try to ensure you lie in a way which does not compress the area of discomfort.

You can also try placing a pillow between your legs to prevent your hip crossing over which can irritate your symptoms.



## Exercises

Exercise	Position	Description
<p>Static abduction in lying</p> <p><i>*Abduction is a movement away from the midline of the body</i></p>		<p>Lie on your back with a pillow or rolled towel under knees. Tie a strong band (or dressing gown cord) around your ankles or knees positioned to allow a neutral alignment. Slowly begin to move your legs outwards pushing against the band. Try to keep your thigh muscles relaxed on the pillow and feel the majority of the work coming from the outer part of your hips. Hold for 30 seconds at a tolerable level and relax.</p> <p>Repeat 5-8 times</p>
<p>Static abduction in standing</p>		<p>Stand with feet a hip width. Maintain a flat foot position with more weight placed through your heels. Slowly push your legs apart as if you are going to do a splits movement. Use the friction of your feet on the floor to create this. Try to keep your thigh muscles relaxed and feel the majority of the work coming from the outer part of your hips. Hold for upto 30 seconds at a tolerable level and relax.</p> <p>Repeat 5-8 times</p>

**Please use this space to write notes or reminders.**

## Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends, and carers.

## Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager  
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary  
Wigan Lane  
Wigan WN1 2NN

## Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



## How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use, and store the information we hold about you, please see patient information leaflet, Ref. **Corp 006** How we use your information, this can be found on the Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website, see details on the front cover.

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille, and other languages upon request. For more information, please ask in the department/ward.

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