

The Top 3 Causes of Lower Back Pain:

1. Arthritis, Stenosis, Disc Degeneration
2. Herniated Disc.
3. Pelvis

Here we're going to focus on a Herniated Disc...

The progression of a disc problem from good to bad is as follows:

- Healthy disc
- Bulging disc
- Herniated disc
- Ruptured disc

So What is it?

As a disc bulges, herniates and ruptures, it puts an increasing amount of pressure on the nerves in the spine. This leads to pain and can eventually cause numbness, tingling and pain down into the legs. This is commonly called "**SCIATICA**" (pronounced SI-ATTIC-A) or a pinched nerve.

How It Works.

There is a space between the bones in your back and in this space there is a disc. Therefore, the disc acts as a shock absorber to help with the forces in your spine. The disc is like a jelly donut, it has a gel like substance in the middle, this is surrounded by a tough fiber like outer layer that holds it together. Sometimes the fibers can break down and allow some of the disc and gel to push out and put pressure in the nerves in the lower back.

Common Symptoms.

Most people suffering from lower back pain and sciatica from a herniated disc have pain bending forward, lifting, coughing, twisting and sitting. The pain is usually relieved with bending backwards or standing.

Can you heal a herniated disc?

MRIs. If you took an MRI of 100 people without pain, how many would have a herniated disc or other disc problem? The answer may surprise you It's 80 that showed a herniated disc, but no complaint of pain. From research and personal experience, I have worked with many people who were suffering from severe back pain and sciatica AND had a positive MRI for herniated disc. Several were experiencing weakness in their legs.

One specific patient that I can think of, was a man about 38 years old and he came in with pain and weakness of his right ankle, he noticed he was tripping more, catching his right toe on the ground. It turned out he had weakness of his right leg (he couldn't pull his foot up) and that caused the tripping. His MRI showed a herniated disc pushing on the nerve. He had about 8 weeks of therapy, the pain was gone in his leg, the strength came back in his ankle and he wasn't tripping anymore.

Did he go back and get another MRI to see if the disc had healed?

Of course not! I don't think and insurance company will pay for an MRI for someone who is pain free and healed.