

Hip Pain

The hip joint is a true ball in socket joint with stability simply provided by the structure. Often overlooked is the stability of the hip in terms of muscular support and function. The hip joint is an integral part of function, being the primary force transfer component. Weakness or loss of hip motion can cause knee, ankle, and low back pain.

Some Hip Issues Include:

Osteoarthritis: The degradation of cartilage in the hip, with concurrent bone spurring, causes pain, limited range of motion, and decreased function. It is commonly responsible for the grinding that you feel (and hear!) with movement of the joint. Unfortunately, most people respond to the pain by limiting the use of the joint. As stresses are healthy for joints, reducing activity speeds degradation of the joint. Rather, exercise is warranted to strengthen and stabilize the hip. As some joints are too acutely painful to tolerate land-based exercise, aquatic therapy is commonly used early on to improve joint health and reduce pain. Manual therapy is also beneficial to increase joint motion and decrease pain.

Bursitis/Tendinopathy: A bursa is a fluid-filled sac that protects your body from trauma. You have several throughout your body. The bursa on the outside of your “hip bone”, on the upper, outer part of your thigh, commonly becomes inflamed from trauma, overuse, or muscular imbalance. The area is painful to the touch, sore to lay on, and painful with activity. Research supports physical therapy for this condition.

What can physical therapy do for Hip pain?

As with the knee, pain in the hip may be caused by weakness in other parts of the body. The hip may compensate for limitations elsewhere but at the cost of an increased risk for injury or wear over time. A physical therapist can examine your whole body to determine issues that could contribute to a hip condition. Often, clearing issues in other parts of the body, through treatment and education, reduces hip pain, even without targeted work at the hip. For athletes, the hip is the primary power source for jumping, cutting, and twisting. Proper treatment can be instrumental in improving hip function, which can enhance athletic performance, even if you don't have hip pain.

Treatments for Hip pain

Manual Therapy: Hands-on therapy, including joint mobilization to increase movement, massage to decrease the pain of inflamed tissues, and instrument-assisted tissue work to decrease pain and increase function.

Aquatic therapy: Water therapy is a great place to start for those with high pain levels and significant limitations because loads on the joint are decreased. Aquatic therapy is offered in our Geneseo location.

Exercise: A personalized program is designed to increase the strength of hip musculature and underlying core weakness that may be contributing to the hip condition. Stretching is also valuable to decrease irritation and loosen tight tissues.

TENS/Ultrasound: Electrical stimulation and ultrasonic waves are used to decrease pain and inflammation, improving exercise tolerance. Ultrasound is particularly beneficial for patients with hip bursitis in the acute stage, the first number of weeks.