

My Hip Hurts When I Walk

Understanding Activity-Related Hip Pain

Why Does My Hip Hurt With Walking?

Pain that develops or worsens with walking is one of the most common hip complaints — and one of the most functionally limiting. The hip joint bears 3–5 times your body weight with every step, making it extremely sensitive to any problem with joint health, muscle strength, or movement mechanics. Identifying the pattern of your pain is the key to finding the cause.

What Are the Most Common Causes?

Pain in the groin / front of the hip:

- Hip osteoarthritis — most common cause of progressive walking pain in adults over 50
- Hip labral tear — deep groin ache with walking and pivoting
- Hip flexor tendinopathy — front-of-hip ache with each step and hip extension

Pain on the outer hip / side:

- Greater trochanteric bursitis or gluteal tendinopathy — outer hip pain, often worsened by stairs
- IT band syndrome — outer hip/thigh pain, often in runners

Pain in the buttock:

- Piriformis syndrome — deep buttock ache often with sciatica-like leg symptoms
- Sacroiliac joint dysfunction — pain at the base of the spine and buttock

Pain referred from elsewhere:

- Lumbar spine issues — a disc or nerve problem in the back can cause hip-region pain
- Referred pain from the hip can also be felt in the knee — the two joints should always be assessed together

What Does It Feel Like?

- Pain that starts after a certain distance and gets progressively worse
- A limp that develops with fatigue

- Stiffness that limits stride length
- Pain that eases with rest but returns as soon as walking resumes

When Should I Be Concerned?

- Sudden severe pain after a fall or impact — possible fracture
- Fever with hip pain — possible infection
- Pain at rest and at night that never improves with position change
- Rapid worsening over days to weeks

The Good News

Activity-related hip pain is one of the most treatable conditions in physical therapy. By identifying the precise source of pain, strengthening the right muscles, correcting movement patterns, and addressing contributing factors, most patients can return to comfortable walking — often for longer distances than they have been able to manage in years.

With targeted PT, most patients successfully **return to comfortable walking** and daily activities within 6 to 10 weeks.

This information is for general educational purposes only and is not a substitute for a professional evaluation. Call us today — we have immediate openings with no waitlist.

Call (781) 769-2040 • Book online at www.ptandsr.com