How Physical Therapy Can Help…
Coccydynia: Tailbone Pain

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What causes my pain when sitting?
A: Pain with sitting may be due to mal-alignment of the tailbone, compression of a nerve in the pelvic floor muscles, or spasm of the pelvic floor muscles.

Q: Does the tailbone move?
A: The tailbone is designed to have a “spring” to it. It can be mobilized at the joint between the sacrum and coccyx and its associated ligaments. By releasing or “loosening up” the muscles that articulate with the tailbone, it can be “coaxed” back into place.

Q: Could my constipation and tailbone issues be related?
A: Generally constipation is result of a medical or diet related issue. However, if the tailbone is anteverted (curled forward) it may narrow the diameter of the rectum, making it difficult to have a bowel movement.

Q: How do you approach internal pelvic floor / coccyx work?
A: Females are generally treated vaginally and males are treated rectally. Because the tailbone is located behind the rectum, it is most directly accessed rectally. If you have hemorrhoids, we will most likely work vaginally for a woman or externally for a man.
Coccydynia: Tailbone Pain

Pain in the area of the coccyx (tailbone) is called coccydynia or coccygodynia. The coccyx is the lowest part of the spine. The coccyx is a site of connection for the pelvic floor muscles which help support the bowel, bladder, and uterus (in women).

One known function of the tailbone is to absorb shock in the event of a fall. Decreased mobility, such as after a traumatic fall, may result in symptoms including: tailbone pain, pain in the perineum (genital region), pain with sitting, pain during intercourse, bladder problems (tailbone mal-alignment causes pelvic floor tightness), and constipation. If the tailbone is anteverted significantly (curled forward), it narrows the passage of the rectum which is directly in front of the coccyx (see figure 1).

The most common causes of tailbone pain include falls onto the coccyx, trauma during labor, and postural reasons (the “way” you sit may cause your coccyx to come out of midline position).

We advise that you see your doctor to be cleared of serious pathology before requesting a referral for a physical therapy evaluation.

How Physical Therapy Can Help

Physical therapy seeks to eliminate pain associated with coccydynia by increasing mobility in the tailbone and decreasing muscle tension in the pelvic floor (hypertonus).

Evaluation / treatment may consist of: re-aligning the pelvic girdle, ensuring the SI joints and hips are not involved, and working either vaginally and/or rectally on relaxing the tightness or increased tone/guarding of the pelvic floor muscles. Once the muscle tone is normalized, gentle but direct mobilization of the coccyx towards midline is completed.

The patient is always in control during internal pelvic floor / coccyx work. The work may be tender but it will be kept in a range where the patient can still be able to relax his/her pelvic floor muscles.

About Pelvic Therapy Specialists

Pelvic Therapy Specialists, PC offers high quality physical therapy treatment and personalized care for pelvic floor disorders and uro-gynecological diagnoses.

Our practice is different to most physical therapy clinics as we are dedicated solely to treating lower back and pelvic regional diagnoses.

Our therapists combined have 300+ hours of specific pelvic and spinal related continuing education training. Patients are treated solely by licensed physical therapists with doctorates primarily utilizing one on one manual therapy techniques and exercise instruction.

In addition to partnering with a large number of health insurance companies we also welcome "out-of-network" insurance and will work with all patients to help minimize treatment fees.

Feel free to contact us at info@pelvictherapy.com or visit our website at www.pelvictherapy.com