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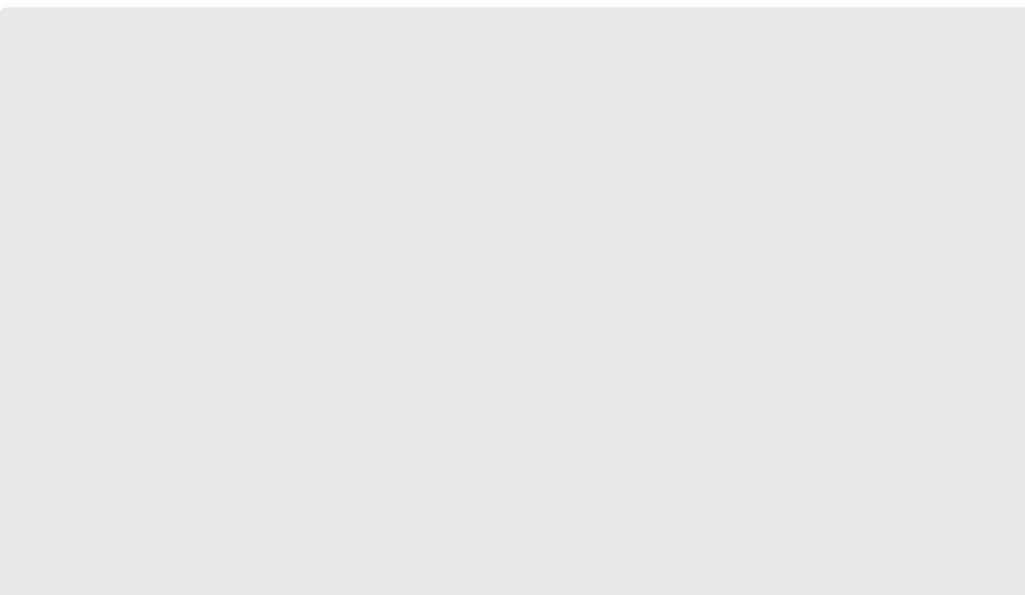


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Ankylosing Spondylitis: Relieving Butt Pain

When ankylosing spondylitis pain makes it hurt to sit, these tips and exercises can help ease the ache



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By Beth W. Orenstein | Follow @EverydayHealth
Medically reviewed by Farrokh Sohrabi, MD



Do you have a pain in the butt?

One of the first signs of ankylosing spondylitis is pain of the sacroiliac joints – the two joints that connect the lower spine to the pelvis. When your sacroiliac joints are inflamed, it can cause pain in your lower back and your buttocks. Get relief with a combination of medication, light exercises, proper posture, and heat and cold treatments.

Ankylosing Spondylitis Pain Management

Take breaks. "If you sit at a computer much of the day, it's

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important that you get up and move around at least a minute or two every hour,” said David Borenstein, MD, director of the George Washington University Spine Center and author of the book *Heal Your Back*.

Find the right chair. Choose a chair that offers support for your back and buttocks and allows you to sit with your knees and hips at a 90-degree angle. “Chairs with arms are best because they support the upper body,” Dr. Borenstein said.

Use a pillow. Place a soft pillow between your back and the chair to cushion your spine and relieve some of your ankylosing spondylitis pain, said Marianne Ryan, PT, OCS, clinical director of MRPT Physical Therapy in New York City and a spokeswoman for the American Physical Therapy Association. If you have butt pain, try an orthopedic U-shaped cushion so that you’re not sitting on your butt, Ryan said. The U-shape will keep your tailbone from pushing up on your spine.

Ankylosing Spondylitis: Relieve Pain by Stretching

A physical therapist can help you design an effective exercise program. “As physical therapists, we preach that ‘motion is lotion,’ and that’s very true with ankylosing spondylitis,” said Eric Robertson, PT, DPT, OCS, a physical therapist in Denver and assistant professor at the Regis University School of Physical Therapy.

Here are some exercises to help you manage ankylosing spondylitis and butt pain:

Back stretches. Get on the floor on your hands and knees. Let your head droop. Round your back up toward the ceiling. You should feel the stretch in your upper, middle and lower back. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds – as long as it feels comfortable. Return to the starting position then sway your back by pressing your stomach toward the floor. Lift your butt toward the ceiling. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat up to four times.

Pelvic tilts. Lay on the floor with your knees bent and your feet flat. Your arms should be out to the side forming a “T” with your body, palms up. Inhale, and then as you let out your breath, press your lower back down into the floor. Don’t lift your hips or tailbone off the floor. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds, and then tilt the bottom of your pelvis up, creating an arch in your lower back. Don’t lift your hips or tailbone off the floor. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds. Return to starting position. Repeat two to four times.

Hip flexor stretch. Kneel on your right knee. Bring your left foot forward with your left knee bent at 90 degrees. Raise your right arm overhead. Rock forward and stretch your hip flexors. You should feel mild tension in the front of your hip. Be sure to keep your shoulders straight. Hold 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat on the opposite side. Do two to four times.

Ankylosing Spondylitis: Reduce Pain

Maintain good posture. Slouching when you’re exercising or sitting will exacerbate your pain.

Avoid impact activities. Running on roads is likely to exacerbate your lower back and buttock pain, Robertson said. Choose exercises such as bicycling or swimming that aren’t as harsh on your joints. A cross-trainer machine is also beneficial.

Change it up. Your exercise routine should include a mix of strengthening, cardiovascular or aerobic exercises, and stretching exercises.

Listen to your body. It’s okay if you have some mild aches and pains when you’re performing exercises. But if your pain doesn’t ease off when you’re done, don’t ignore it. Talk to your doctor or your trainer.

Take anti-inflammatories. Ask your doctor to suggest medications to reduce inflammation and, in turn, ankylosing spondylitis pain. Some people find NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) work well. Others may need corticosteroids such as prednisone (although long-term steroids can have side effects) or anti-inflammatory medications that block your immune system. Talk to your doctor about whether medications should be part of your ankylosing spondylitis treatment. It is important you take any medications exactly as prescribed.



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Try a warm shower or bath. Let the warm water run on your back and butt. Applying cold also can reduce inflammation and reduce pain.

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