

GTPS (Hip Pain)

Greater Trochanteric Pain Syndrome

Patient Information Leaflet

MSK Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Service



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What is GTPS?

GTPS is a common condition that causes pain on the outside of the hip.

It happens when the tendons and soft tissues around the bony point on the side of your hip (the greater trochanter) become irritated or overloaded.

GTPS is very common in adults. It can be painful, but it is not dangerous, and most people improve with the right advice and exercises.

Common symptoms:

- pain on the outside of the hip
- pain when lying on the painful side
- pain when walking, especially longer distances
- pain when standing on one leg (for example when getting dressed)
- pain when going up or down the stairs
- pain when pressing the outside of the hip
- sometimes, pain can spread down the thigh, but usually not below the knee

Why does it happen?

There are several different factors that contribute to developing GTPS. It is usually related to a change in load

and how much stress is put through the hip muscles and tendons.

'Load' refers to the force we place on the muscles and tendons.

A muscle and tendons' ability to cope with this load is called its 'capacity'. If the load is bigger than the capacity, this can cause pain. This process is often gradual and develops slowly over time but can occur more quickly in response to a specific activity.

Common contributing factors include:

- increased walking, running or activity levels
- sudden changes in activity levels (for example doing too much too soon)
- weakness in the muscles around the hip
- a fall on to the side of your hip
- being overweight
- GTPS is also more common in women aged 40-60, although anyone can get it.

Self-help

Management focuses on calming the pain and slowly building strength so you can return to normal activities.

Helpful strategies include:

Activity modification

Try to reduce or change movements that make the pain worse. This is usually only needed for a short time.

Keeping the hip moving

Avoid complete rest. Gentle movement helps the hip stay flexible.

Modify painful positions

Try not to cross your legs or stand with your hip pushed out to one side.

Sleeping positions

If lying on the painful side hurts, lie on the other side with a pillow between your knees. You can also place a pillow behind your back to stop you rolling onto the painful side.

Graded strengthening exercises

Exercises that slowly build strength in your hip muscles are the best way to improve your symptoms. Start gently and increase gradually.

Pain management

Heat (i.e. hot water bottles) or ice (i.e. frozen peas wrapped in a tea towel) can help reduce pain. If needed, speak to a pharmacist or GP about pain relief.

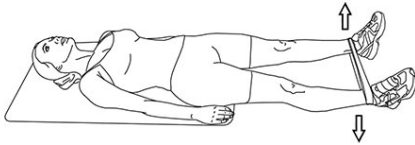
Exercises

The following exercises are a good starting point. You may feel a stretch or mild discomfort, but this should settle after you stop.

Start with Level 1, if you feel these are too easy, progress to Level 2.

Level 1 Exercises

Level 1 Exercise: Hip Abduction



Lie flat on your back (on the bed or floor).

Tie an exercise band around your ankles.

With the painful leg, gently push the leg out to the side into the band.

This may only produce a couple of cm of movement.

Hold 10 secs | Repeat 5 times | Perform 1 to 2 times daily

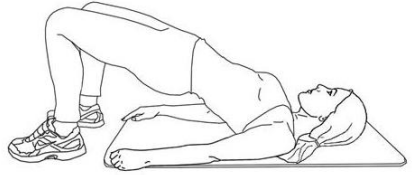
Access a video of this exercise below (digital leaflet only):

[Rehab My Patient: Hip Abduction](#)

Level 1 Exercise: Bridge

Lie flat on your back (on the bed or floor).

With your knees bent, squeeze your bottom muscles and lift your body upwards.



Lift your bottom off the floor and slowly lower back down.

Repeat 5–10 times | **Perform** 1 to 2 times daily

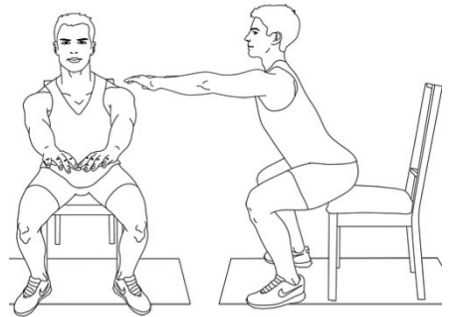
Access a video of this exercise below (digital leaflet only):

[Rehab My Patient: Bridge](#)

Level 1 Exercise: Chair Squat

Stand up and position yourself in front of a chair or stool.

Bend your knees to go into a squat position and touch your bottom on the chair.



Push up and go into the standing position.

Repeat 5–10 times | **Perform** 1 to 2 times daily

Access a video of this exercise below (digital leaflet only):

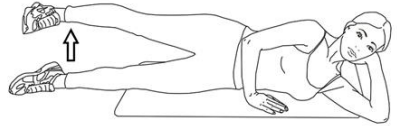
[Rehab My Patient: Chair Squat](#)

Level 2 Exercises

Level 2 Exercise: Hip Abduction

Lying on your side (on the bed or the floor).

Lift your leg several inches in the air. Slowly lower your leg down.



To progress this, hold the leg for a few seconds before lowering.

Repeat 5–10 times | Perform 1 to 2 times daily

Access a video of this exercise below (digital leaflet only):

[Rehab My Patient: Hip Abduction](#)

Level 2 Exercise: Staggered Sit to Stand

Sitting on a chair.

Position your feet so that one leg is further forward (the leg you want to strengthen should be closest to the chair).



Stand up from the seat and slowly sit back down.

Repeat 5-10 times | **Perform** 1 to 2 times daily

Level 2 Exercise: Staggered Bridge

Lie flat on your back with your knees bent.

Place the leg you want to strengthen closer to your bottom.



Squeeze your bottom muscles and lift your bottom off the floor.



Repeat 5-10 times | **Perform** 1 to 2 times daily

How long does it take to improve?

GTPS takes time to settle.

Most people notice improvement after 8–12 weeks of doing the right exercises and making small activity changes. Some cases can take several months and even up to a year to fully settle, particularly if the pain has been there for a long time.

Sticking with your exercises and returning to activity slowly gives the best results.

When should I seek further help?

Speak to a GP or Physiotherapist if:

- pain becomes severe or significantly worsens
- pain is worsening despite changing your activity levels
- your symptoms are showing no signs of improvement
- you develop numbness, weakness or symptoms spreading down the leg

Remember

GTPS is a very common cause of hip pain.

It is usually caused by overload to the tendons and surrounding structures at the side of the hip.

Strengthening exercises are the most effective treatment.

Most people improve with time, exercise and small activity changes.

Acknowledgements



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If you need help to understand this leaflet or would like it in a different language or format such as large print, Braille or audio, please ask a member of staff.



MSK Physiotherapy Service

Find out more about the MSK Physiotherapy Service and what we offer

www.leicspart.nhs.uk/service/musculoskeletal-msk-therapy-physiotherapy/



Further Resources

Access our other MSK Physiotherapy resources [www.leicspart.nhs.uk/msk-](http://www.leicspart.nhs.uk/msk-physiotherapy-resources-getting-started/)

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