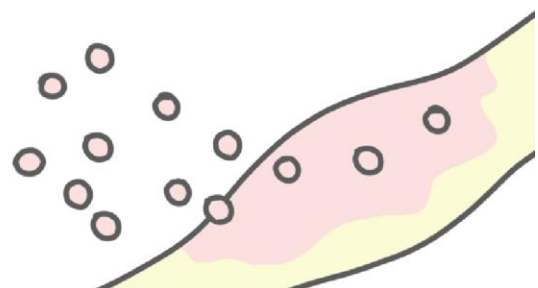
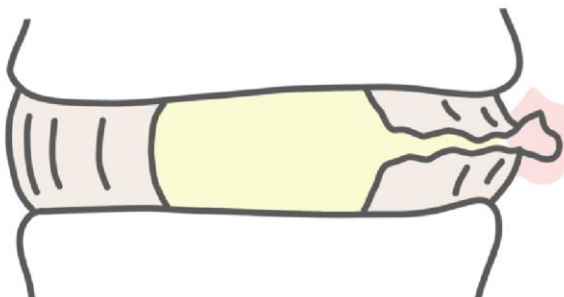
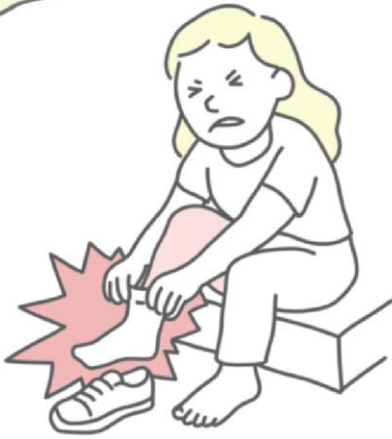
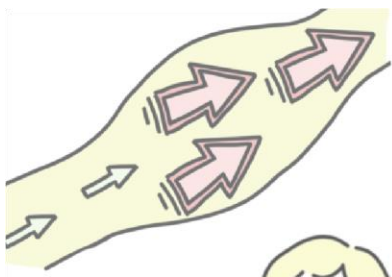
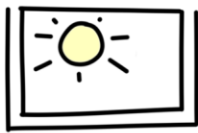


THE SCIATICA GUIDE

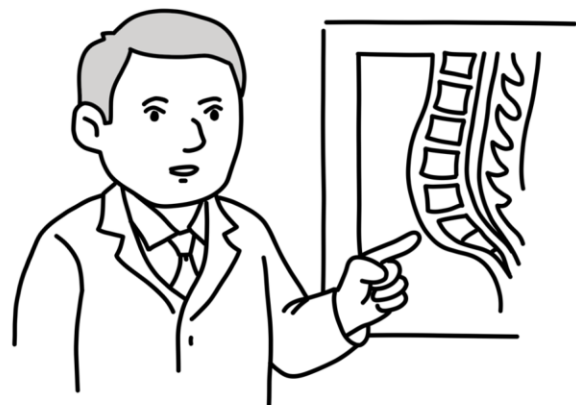
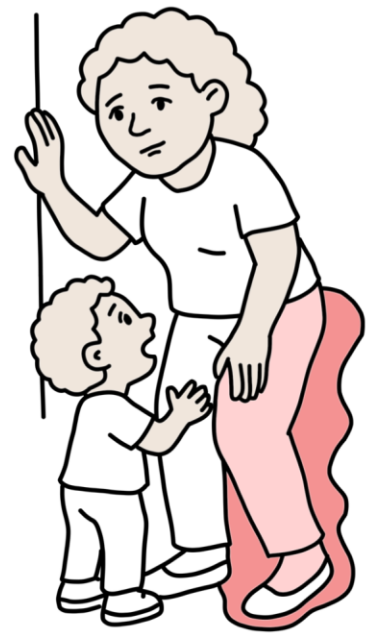
WHAT IT IS,
AND WHAT TO
DO ABOUT IT





YOU HAVE SCIATICA -
SO YOU KNOW HOW BAD
IT CAN BE. SCIATICA CAN
AFFECT EVERY PART
OF YOUR LIFE

AND IT'S OFTEN HARD TO
MAKE SENSE OF SCIATICA.
THE ADVICE YOU'VE HEARD
MIGHT SEEM IRRELEVANT
OR HARD TO FOLLOW.



THIS BOOKLET EXPLAINS WHAT'S GOING ON
SO THAT YOU CAN UNDERSTAND YOUR
SYMPTOMS AND FIND THINGS THAT HELP.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

NERVES SEND
MESSAGES TO
YOUR BRAIN
ABOUT WHAT'S
GOING ON IN
YOUR BODY:

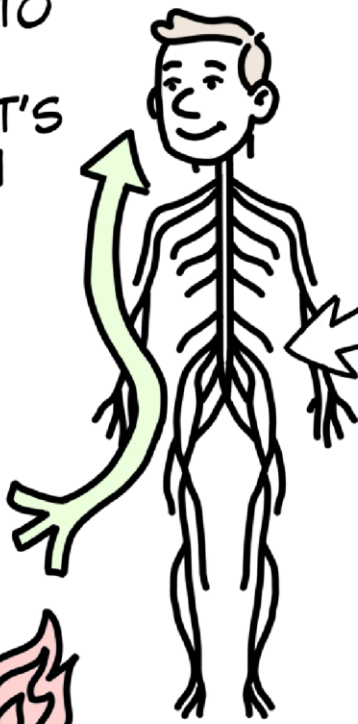
TOUCH



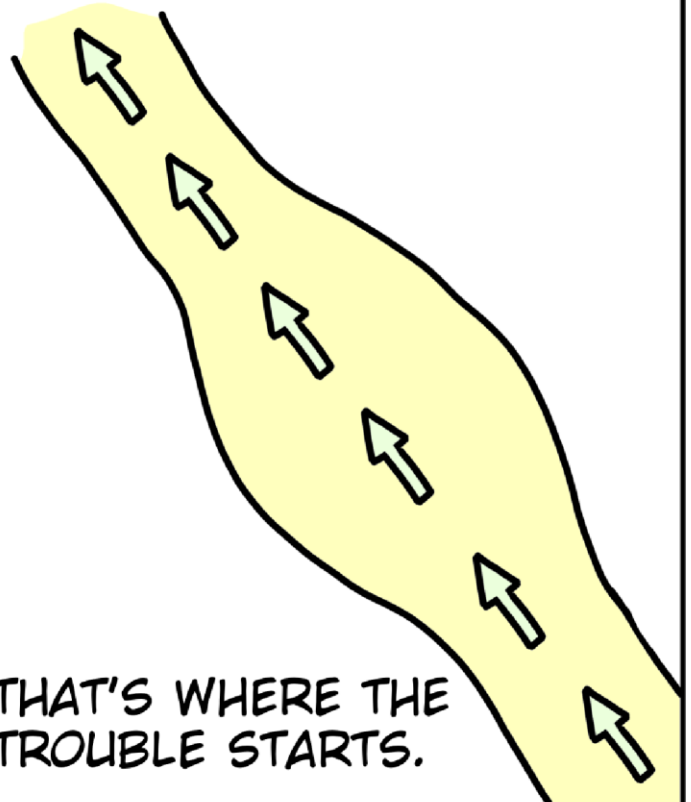
PAIN



HOT/COLD

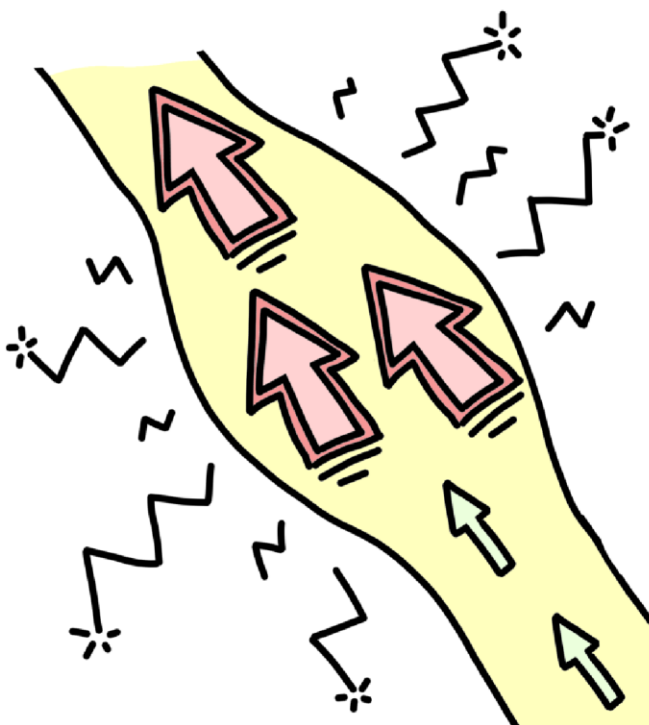


THIS NERVE IN YOUR LOWER
BACK CARRIES MESSAGES
FROM YOUR LEG:



THAT'S WHERE THE
TROUBLE STARTS.

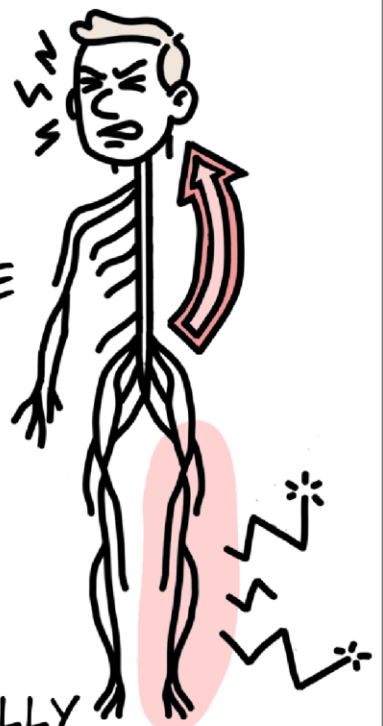
WHEN THE NERVE GETS
IRRITATED, IT CAN FIRE
OFF A LOT OF EXTRA
MESSAGES TO
THE BRAIN

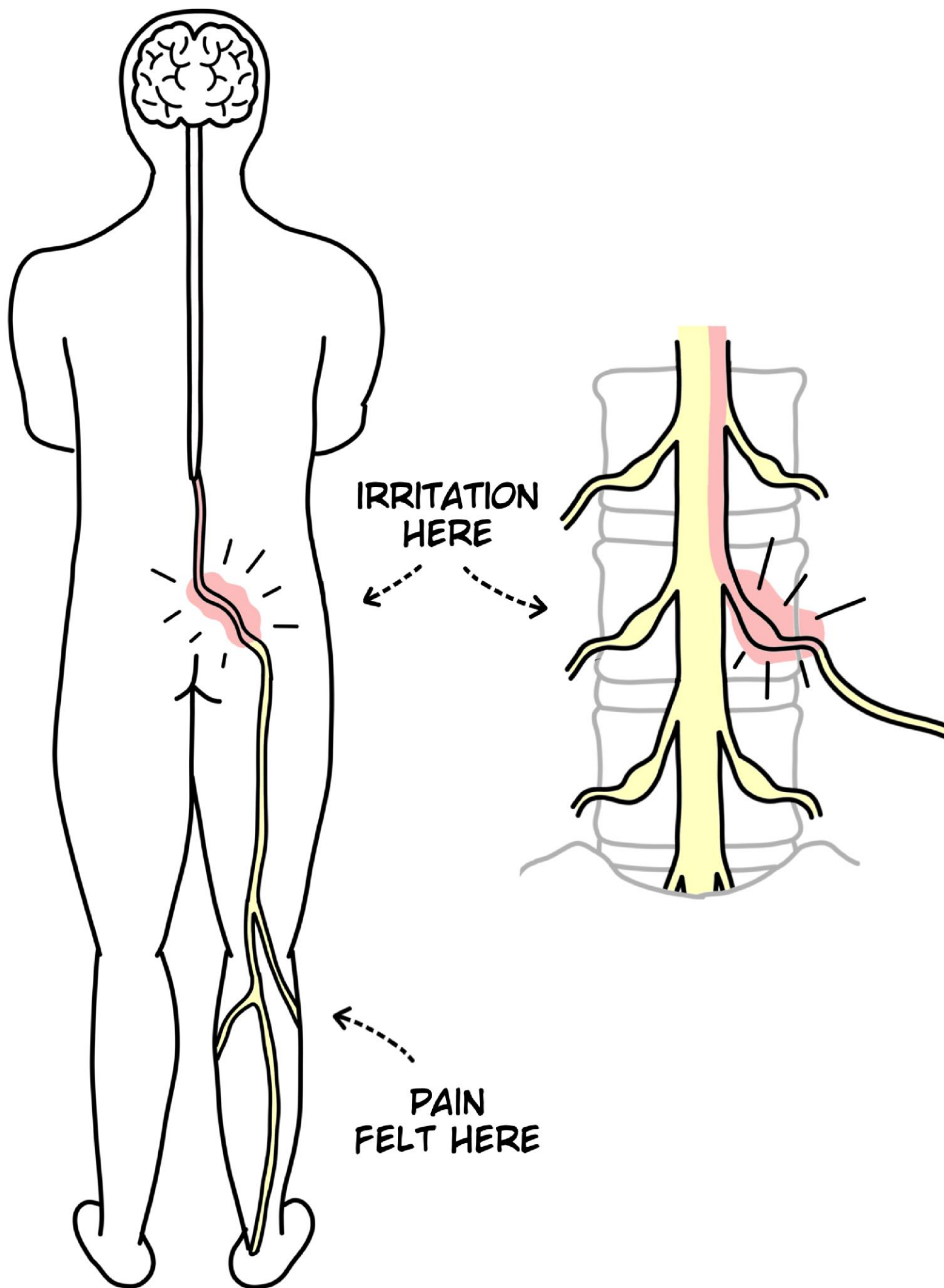


...THOSE EXTRA MESSAGES
CAUSE PAIN.
THAT'S
SCIATICA.

THE TROUBLE
STARTS IN
THE LOWER
BACK...

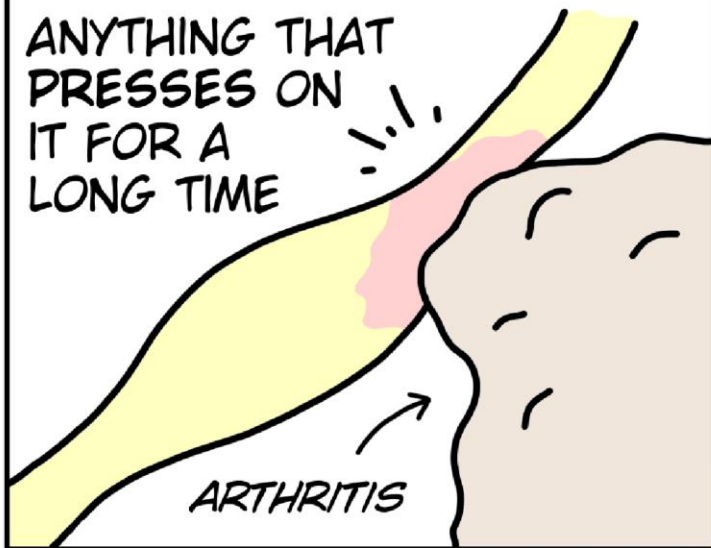
...BUT THE
NERVE USUALLY
CARRIES MESSAGES
FROM THE LEG, SO
YOU FEEL THE PAIN THERE



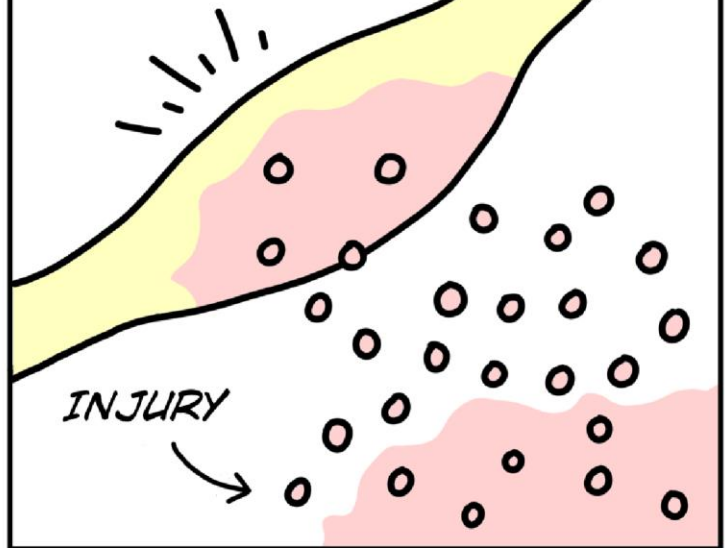


WHAT INJURES THE NERVE
IN YOUR LOWER BACK?

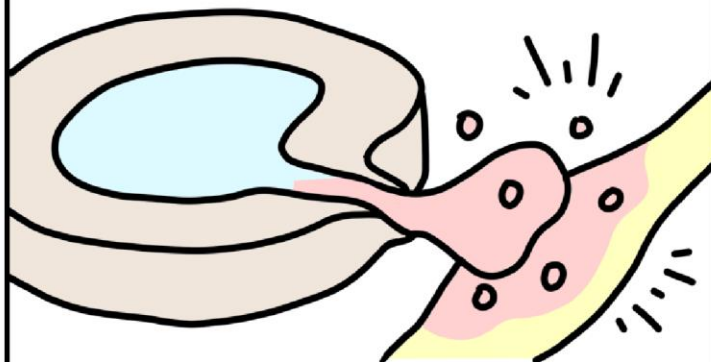
ANYTHING THAT
PRESSES ON
IT FOR A
LONG TIME



OR ANYTHING THAT
INFLAMES IT.

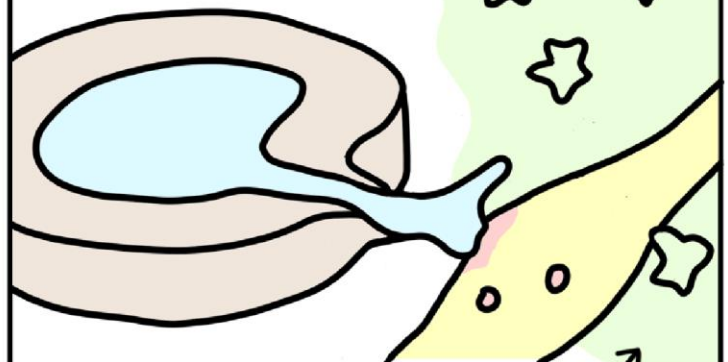


THE MOST COMMON CAUSE
OF SCIATICA CAN DO BOTH.
IT PRESSES AND
INFLAMES YOUR NERVE...



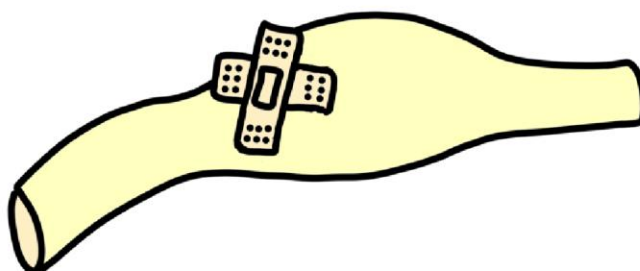
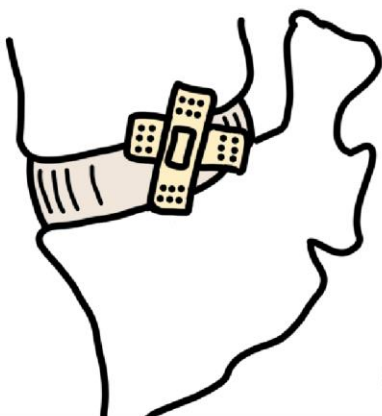
...A DISC HERNIATION.

LUCKILY, YOUR IMMUNE
SYSTEM CAN
CLEAR UP A
HERNIATION.



YOUR IMMUNE CELLS

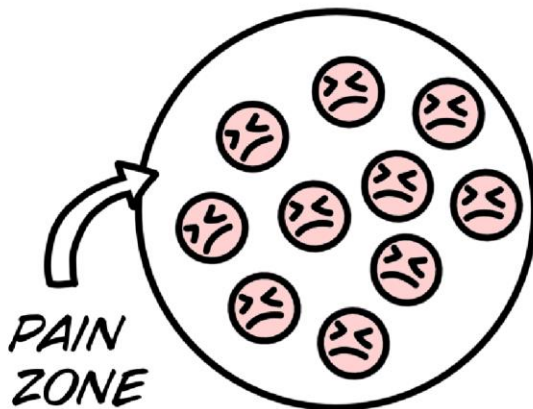
IN TIME, YOUR DISC USUALLY
WORKS LIKE NEW AGAIN...



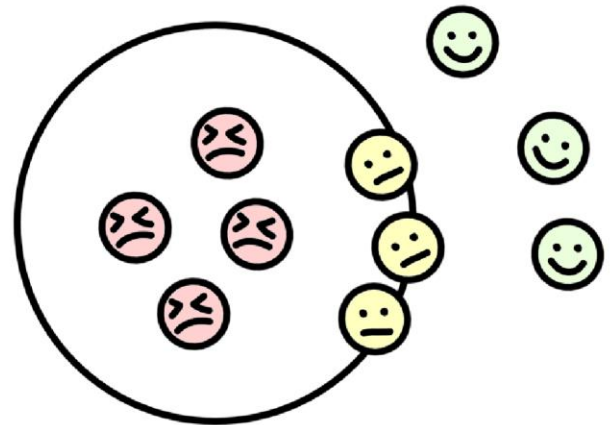
...AND YOUR NERVE
USUALLY SETTLES DOWN, TOO

HOW LONG DOES IT LAST?

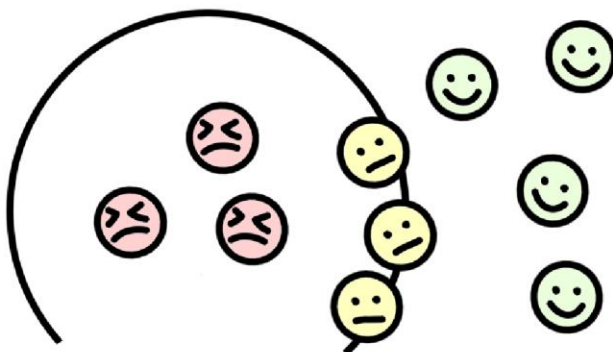
IMAGINE TEN PEOPLE GET SCIATICA ON THE SAME DAY.



MOST PEOPLE START TO FEEL BETTER IN THE FIRST 2-4 WEEKS.

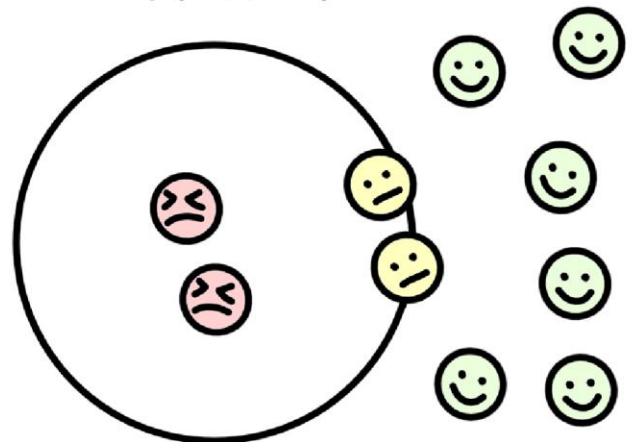


AND MOST FEEL MORE, GRADUAL IMPROVEMENT IN THE FIRST 3 MONTHS.

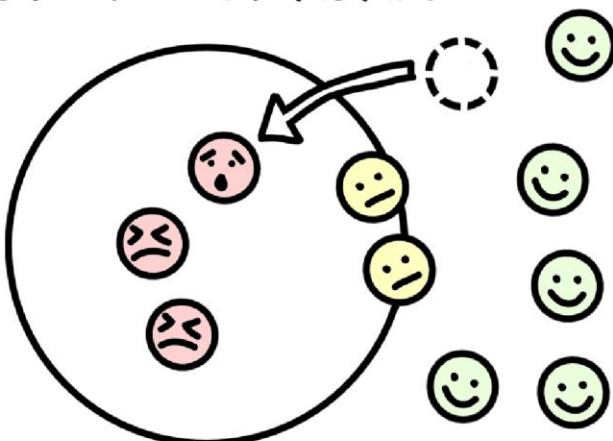


"WEEKS TAKE THE EDGE OFF;
MONTHS TAKE THE REST OFF"

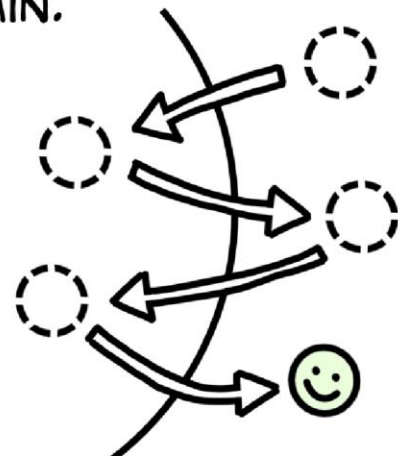
BUT... EVEN AFTER A YEAR, A COUPLE OF OUR TEN STILL HAVE PAIN.



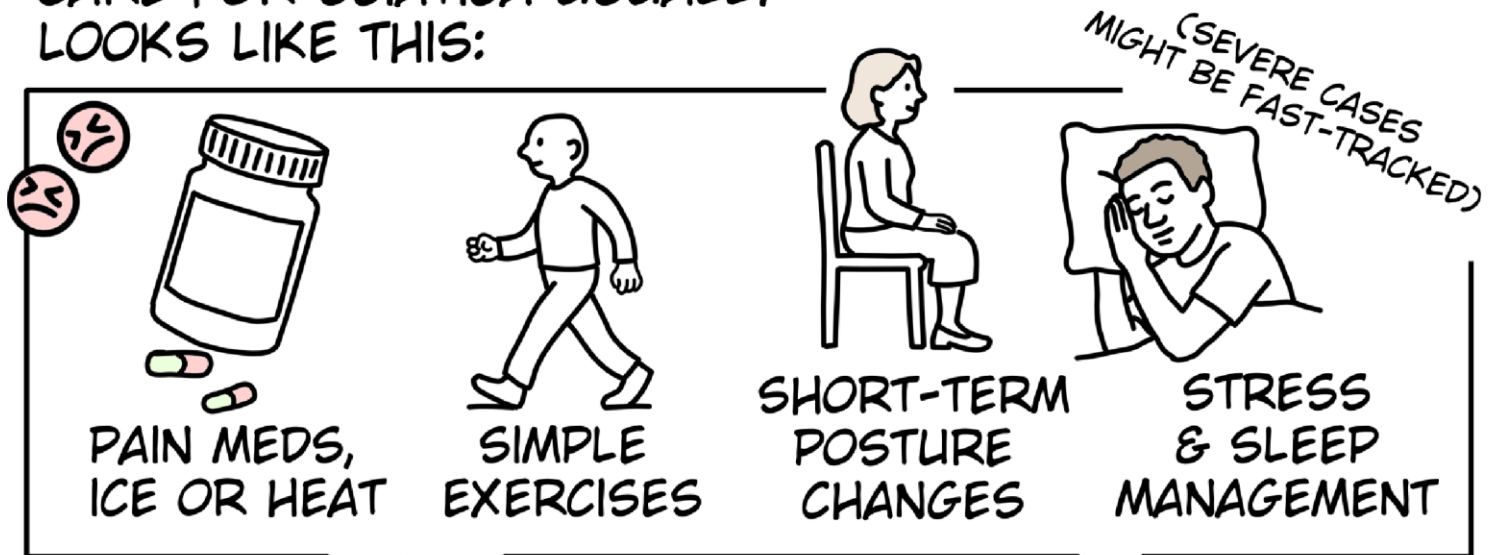
AND SOME PEOPLE WHO DO FEEL BETTER CAN GET WORSE AGAIN.



IN FACT, GETTING BETTER FROM SCIATICA OFTEN INCLUDES FLARE-UPS OF PAIN.



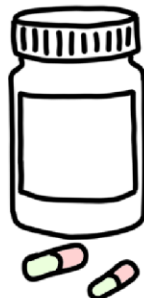
CARE FOR SCIATICA USUALLY LOOKS LIKE THIS:



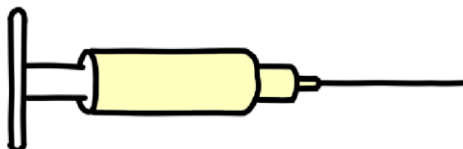
IF IT'S NO BETTER AFTER A FEW WEEKS:



TARGETED EXERCISES



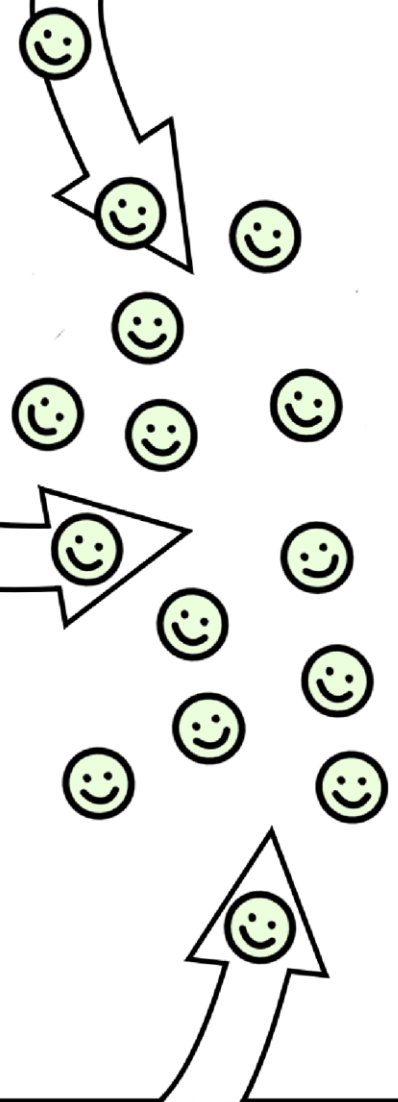
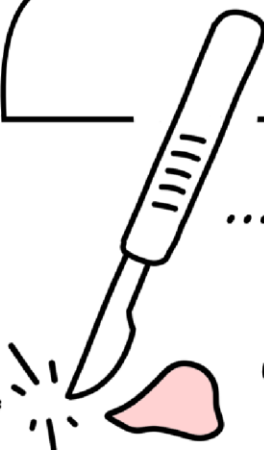
DIFFERENT PAIN MEDS



A SPINAL INJECTION MAY BE OFFERED LATER. CAN BE EFFECTIVE, BUT HIT AND MISS. COMES WITH RISKS.

IF IT'S STILL NO BETTER...

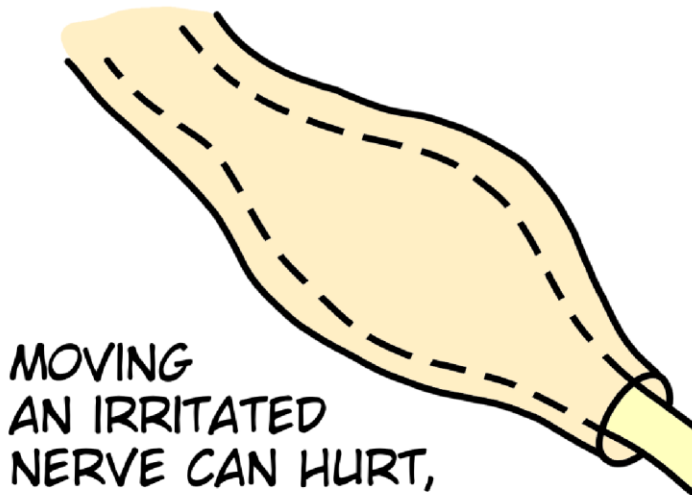
...SPINAL SURGERY MAY BE AN OPTION. IT CAN BE VERY EFFECTIVE. BUT IT ALSO COMES WITH RISKS. AND NOT EVERYONE IS A CANDIDATE



MOVEMENT AND EXERCISE

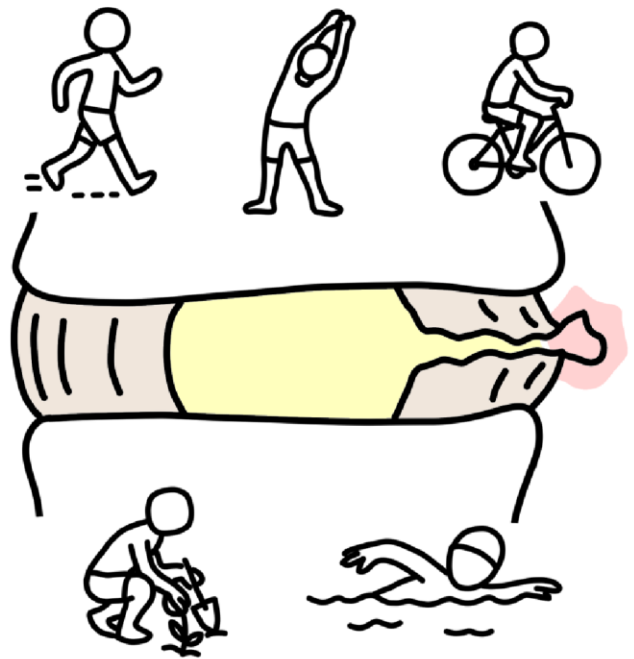
IS IT SAFE TO MOVE?

YES - MUCH SAFER THAN IT FEELS. YOUR NERVES ARE WRAPPED IN A TOUGH PROTECTIVE SHEATH.



MOVING AN IRRITATED NERVE CAN HURT, BUT ISN'T HARMFUL.

AND A DISC HERNIATION HAS ALREADY HAPPENED.



EVERYDAY MOVEMENT AND MODERATE EXERCISE WON'T MAKE IT WORSE.

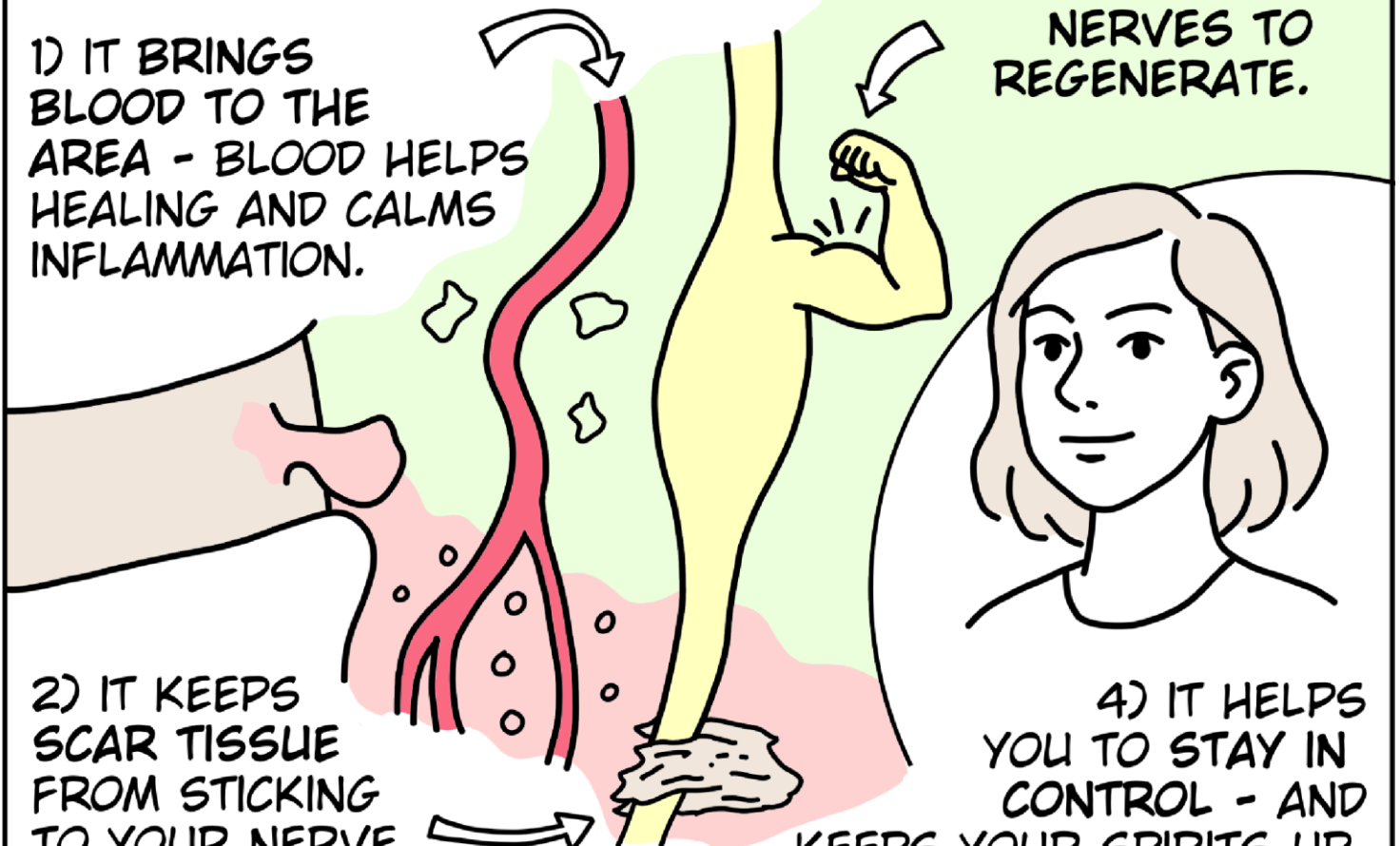
WHY MOVE AND EXERCISE?

1) IT BRINGS BLOOD TO THE AREA - BLOOD HELPS HEALING AND CALMS INFLAMMATION.

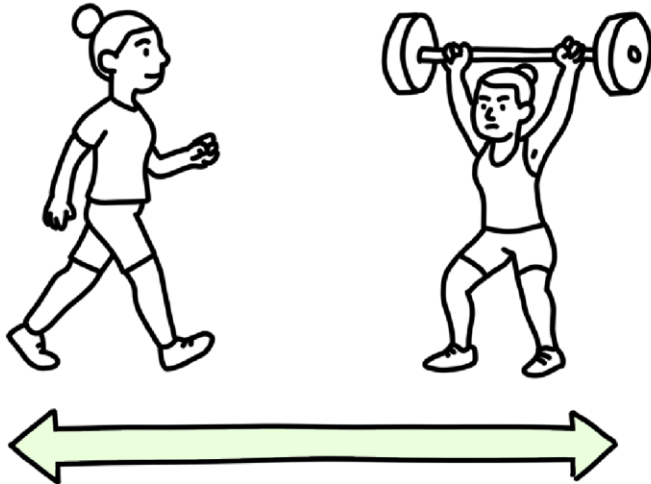
2) IT KEEPS SCAR TISSUE FROM STICKING TO YOUR NERVE.

3) IT HELPS NERVES TO REGENERATE.

4) IT HELPS YOU TO STAY IN CONTROL - AND KEEPS YOUR SPIRITS UP.



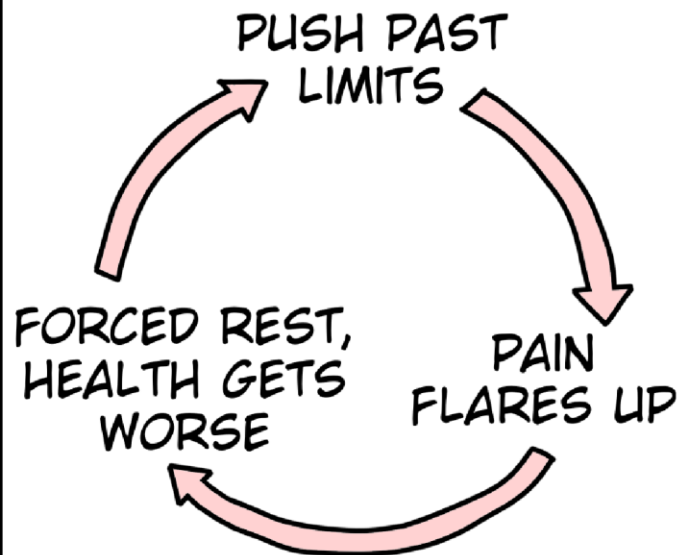
WHAT EXERCISE SHOULD YOU DO? ANYTHING HELPS, SO DO WHATEVER YOU CAN, WITHIN TOLERABLE PAIN.



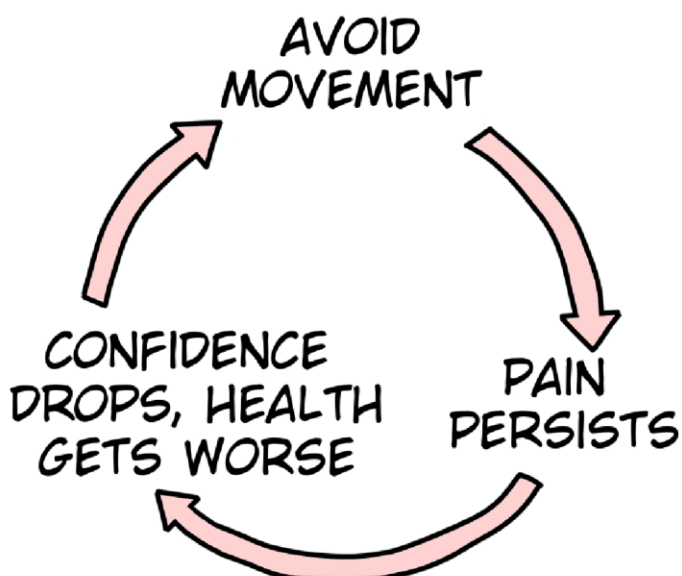
THE POINT IS TO GET YOUR BLOOD GOING, AND YOUR SPINE AND NERVES MOVING

IT AIN'T WHAT YOU DO, IT'S THE WAY THAT YOU DO IT.

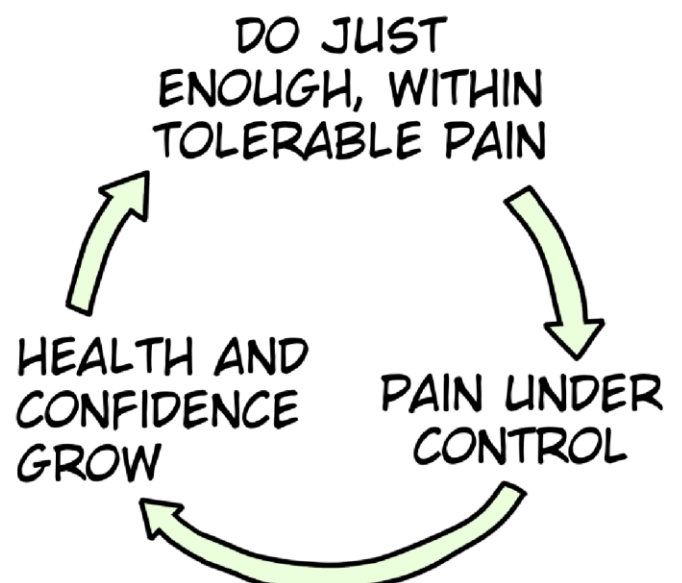
DON'T DO TOO MUCH:



DON'T DO TOO LITTLE:



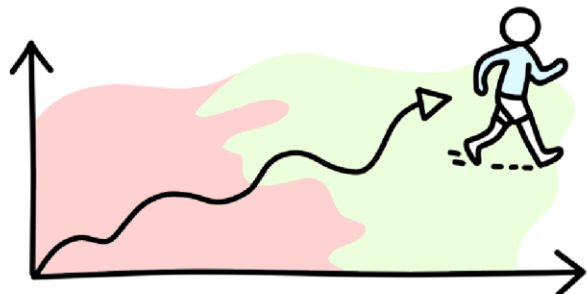
AND AIM FOR THE SWEET SPOT...



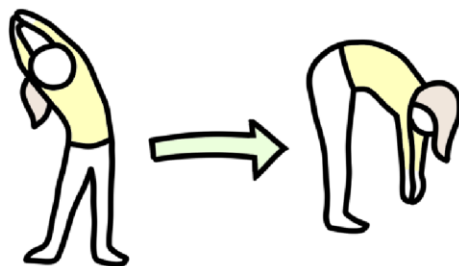
...ALTHOUGH IT'S NOT ALWAYS ACHIEVABLE

SO 'FIND THE SWEET SPOT,
THEN BUILD BACK UP...' FOR
EXAMPLE, YOU MIGHT:

WALK ROUND THE BLOCK,
A LITTLE MORE EACH DAY

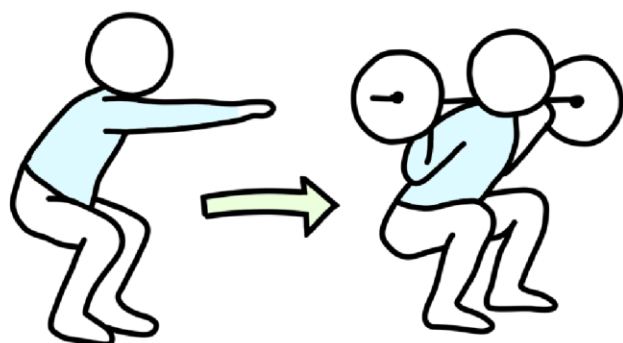


OR IDENTIFY THE STRE-
-TCHES THAT HURT AND THE
STRETCHES THAT DON'T.

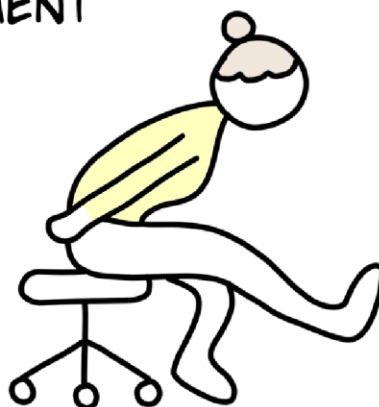


DO THE ONES THAT DON'T
HURT NOW, AND EASE IN TO
THE PAINFUL ONES LATER

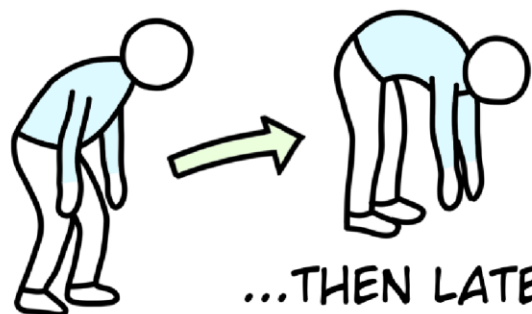
OR, LIFT LIGHTER WEIGHTS
IN THE GYM, WITH LESS
BACK & LEG MOVEMENT...
THEN BUILD BACK UP



OR, START WITH GENTLE
NERVE EXERCISES, THEN
OVER TIME ADD MORE
MOVEMENT



OR, WORK OUT THE EASIEST
WAY TO BEND DOWN.
USUALLY, KEEPING YOUR
BACK STRAIGHT



...THEN LATER,
GRADUALLY START
TO LIFT MORE NATURALLY

AGAIN, IT AIN'T WHAT YOU
DO, IT'S THE WAY THAT
YOU DO IT.

IT'S SIMPLE...
BUT IT'S NOT
ALWAYS EASY.

YOUR THERAPIST -
PHYSIO, CHIROPRACTOR,
ETC - IS THERE TO HELP.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Q: "WHY DO I HAVE PINS AND NEEDLES?"

A: BECAUSE IT'S A NERVE THAT'S IRRITATED.

PINS AND NEEDLES, TINGLING, BUZZING - EVEN STRANGE SENSATIONS LIKE RUNNING WATER OR BUGS CRAWLING ARE ALL NORMAL WITH A NERVE INJURY.

THE NERVE IS FIRING LOTS OF EXTRA SIGNALS WHICH THE BRAIN FEELS AS REAL SENSATIONS.



Q: "MY PAIN FLARES WHEN I'M STRESSED - IS THAT COMMON?"

A: YES - PAIN HAS A 'VOLUME KNOB'. IT'S VERY INDIVIDUAL, BUT PAIN OFTEN GETS 'LOUDER' WITH:



STRESS



FEAR

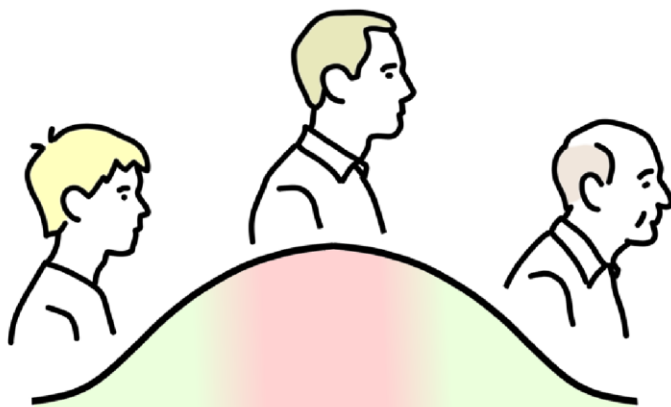


POOR SLEEP



ATTENTION

Q: "IS MY SPINE AGEING? WILL THIS JUST GET WORSE?"



A: NO. THIS IS USUALLY A SINGLE INCIDENT, NOT AGEING. SCIATICA IS MOST COMMON IN YOUR 30S AND 40S, AND LESS LIKELY AS YOU GET OLDER.

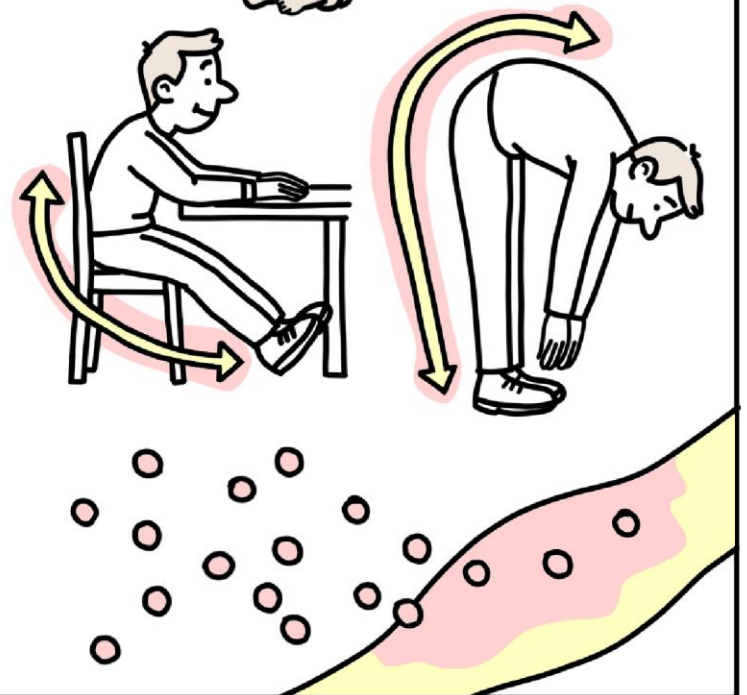
Q: "WHY DOES MY SCIATICA SOMETIMES GET WORSE FOR NO APPARENT REASON?"

A: THREE COMMON CULPRITS:

1) A DELAYED REACTION TO ACTIVITY.
NERVE PAIN CAN FLARE HOURS AFTER ACTIVITY...



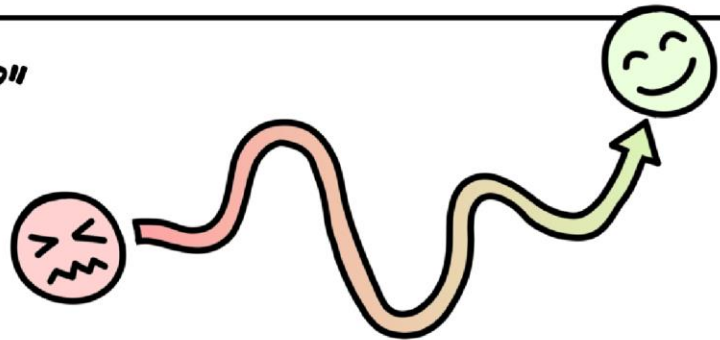
2) NERVE STRETCH.
SLEEPING, SITTING OR STRETCHING WITH YOUR LEG STRAIGHT TUGS ON YOUR SORE NERVE.



3) INFLAMMATION IN THE WHOLE BODY.
POOR SLEEP, STRESS, ALCOHOL AND ILLNESS INCREASE INFLAMMATION

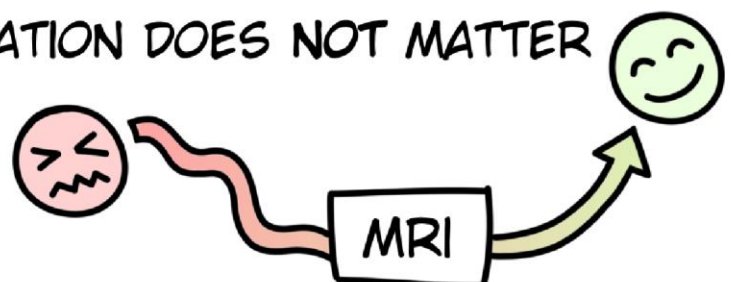
Q: "DO I NEED AN MRI?"

A: FOR MOST SCIATICA, NO. A SCAN DOES NOT CHANGE TREATMENT.



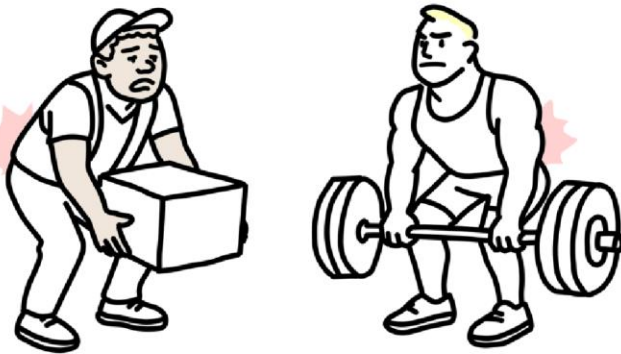
AND THE SIZE OF A HERNIATION DOES NOT MATTER FOR YOUR OUTCOME.

BUT FOR AN UNUSUAL CASE, A SCAN CAN HELP.

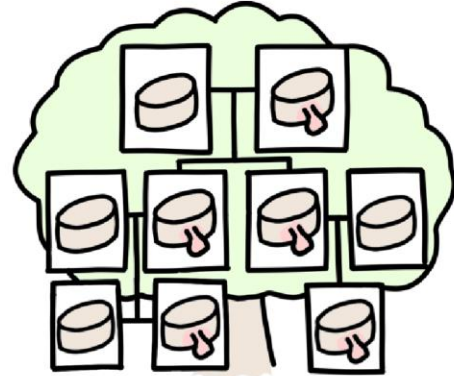


Q: "WHAT CAUSES DISC HERNIATIONS?"

A: IT'S RARELY ONE THING. MORE OFTEN, A MIX OF:



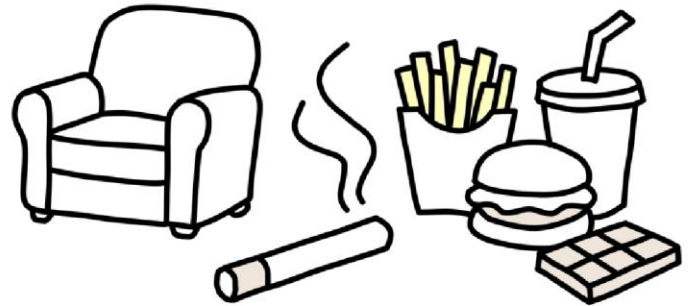
1) LIFTING AND BENDING.
BUT ONLY AT EXTREMES
(ALL DAY EVERY DAY, OR
WITH HEAVY WEIGHTS).



2) GENETICS.
DISC HERNIATIONS
CAN RUN IN FAMILIES.



3) TRAUMA.
ONE BAD
FALL CAN SET
OFF A HERNIATION, SOME-
TIMES YEARS LATER.



4) GENERAL HEALTH.
SMOKING, POOR DIET
AND LACK OF EXERCISE
CAN ALL WEAKEN DISCS.

Q: "IS IT BAD TO BEND MY BACK?"

A: RIGHT AFTER SCIATICA
STARTS, IT'S SOMETIMES
GOOD TO AVOID
BENDING
FOR A WEEK
OR TWO...



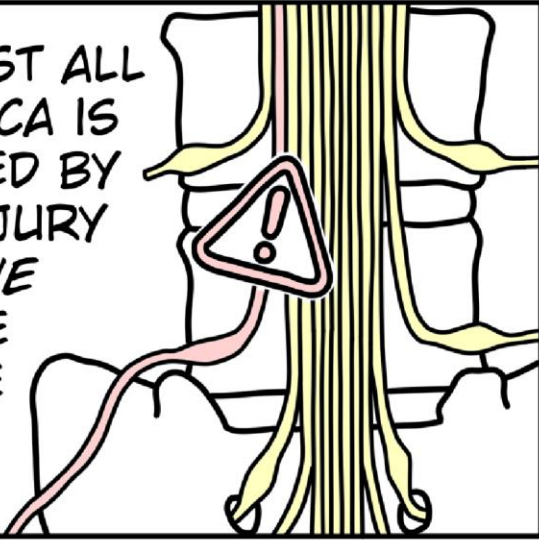
...AFTER THAT, LET
SYMPTOMS GUIDE YOU:
HOW IT FEELS TO BEND.



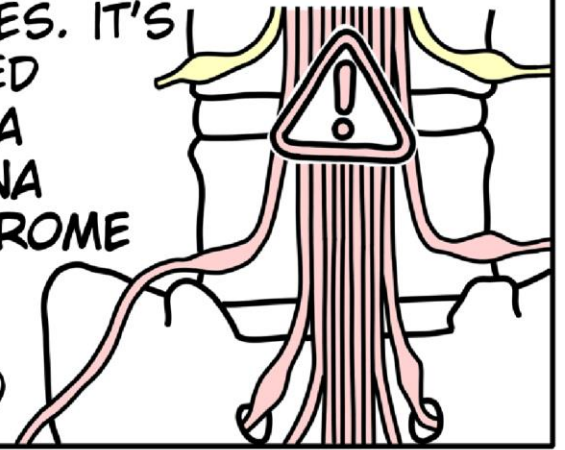
"IT AIN'T
WHAT YOU
DO, IT'S
THE WAY
THAT YOU
DO IT."

WHEN SHOULD YOU WORRY?

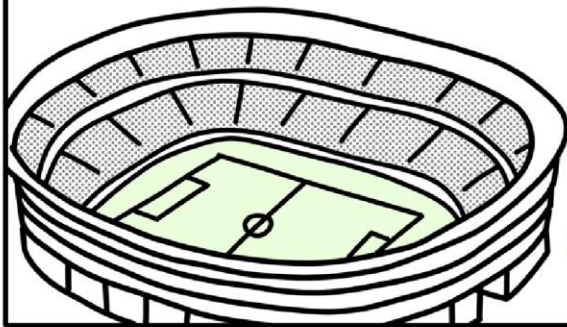
ALMOST ALL SCIATICA IS CAUSED BY AN INJURY TO ONE NERVE IN THE LOW BACK.



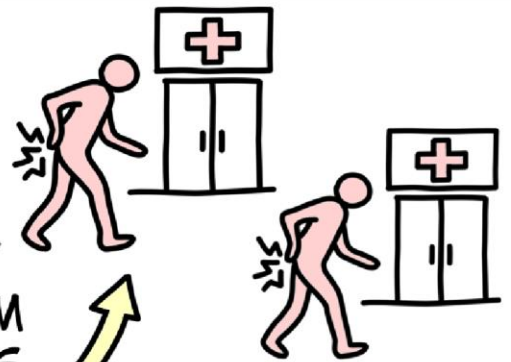
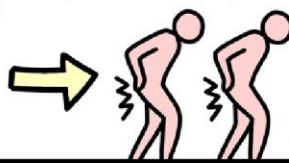
BUT THERE'S A KIND OF SCIATICA CAUSED BY AN INJURY TO ALL THOSE NERVES. IT'S CALLED CAUDA EQUINA SYNDROME (OR JUST 'CES')



CES IS REALLY RARE. YOU COULD FILL A SPORTS STADIUM WITH 80,000 PEOPLE, FOLLOW THEM ALL FOR A YEAR...



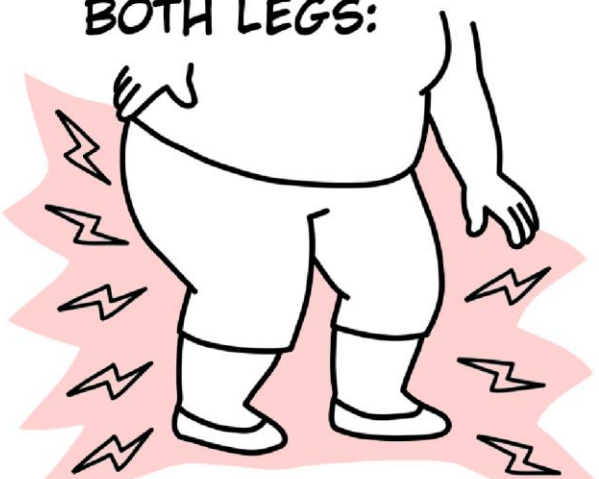
...AND ONLY TWO OF THEM WILL GET CES



BUT IT'S ALSO VERY SERIOUS. A MEDICAL EMERGENCY.

WHAT SYMPTOMS SHOULD YOU LOOK OUT FOR?

1) SCIATICA IN BOTH LEGS:



THAT'S SEVERE PAIN, GOING BELOW THE KNEES

2) TROUBLE URINATING. ANY OF:



A WEAK STREAM



PEEING LESS OFTEN



CAN'T FEEL PEE COMING OUT



UNEXPLAINED ACCIDENTS

3) TROUBLE
DEFECATING
(POOPING)



CAN'T
FEEL IT

GOING LESS
OFTEN



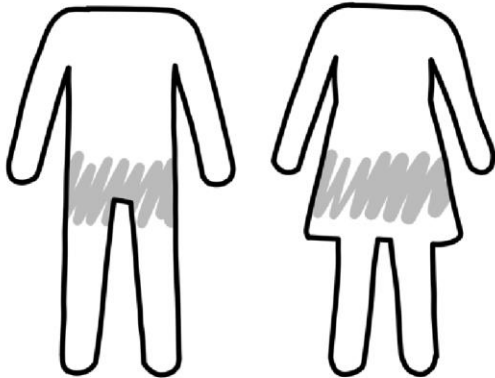
ACCIDENTS

4) LOST FEELING ON SKIN
BETWEEN THE LEGS



ANYWHERE A HORSE'S
SADDLE WOULD TOUCH:
THE BUTTOCKS, GENITALS,
ANUS & THE INNER THIGHS

5) TROUBLE HAVING SEX



CAN'T FEEL THE PENIS
OR THE VAGINA - OR THEY
DON'T WORK DURING SEX

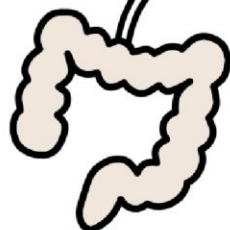
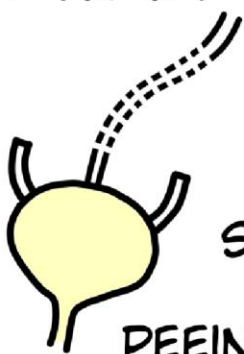
IF ANY OF THOSE FIVE
THINGS ARE NEW (IN THE
LAST TWO WEEKS)...

AND UNEXPLAINED;
THERE'S NO OTHER
REASON FOR THEM...



...SEEK EMERGENCY
CARE FOR POSSIBLE CES!

WITH CES, THE BLADDER,
BOWEL & GENITALS ARE
'SWITCHED OFF': NO
FEELING AND NO
MOVEMENT



SO CONSTIPATION,
AND PAIN WHILE
PEEING DON'T COUNT!

LASTLY, IF YOU HAVE NEW
SCIATICA AND YOU GET AN
UNEXPLAINED FEVER OR
CHILLS...

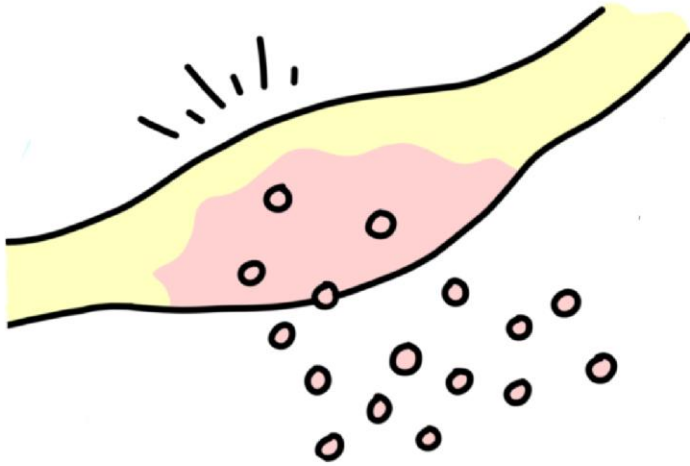


OR YOU BECOME
UNSTEADY ON
YOUR FEET...

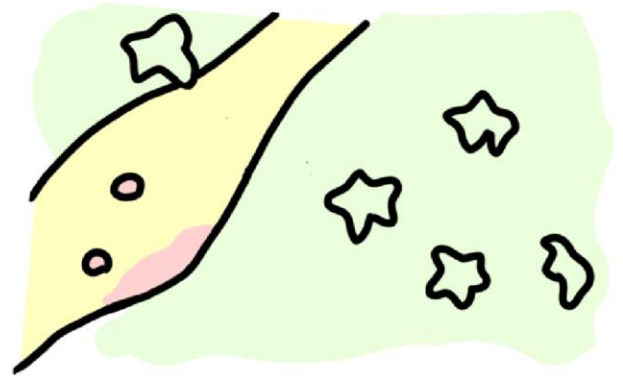


GET CHECKED OUT SOON.

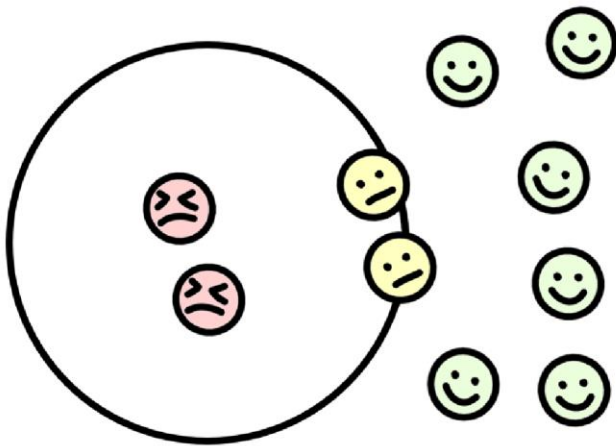
HERE ARE SOME KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER:



1) THE NERVE IS IRRITATED, NOT BROKEN.



2) OVER TIME, THE BODY TRIES TO CALM DOWN THAT IRRITATION



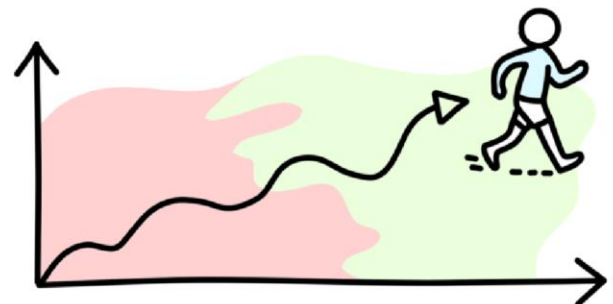
3) MOST SCIATICA SETTLES; SOME STAYS LONG-TERM.



4) MOVEMENT NOURISHES NERVES AND SPINES. DO WHAT YOU CAN.



5) GENERAL HEALTH - SLEEP, STRESS, DIET - CAN AFFECT YOUR PAIN.



6) STAY ENGAGED; DON'T PUT LIFE ON HOLD.

NOTES:

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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