# The Truth About Sciatica

**Jon Burras**

**Muscles and fascia work together in the tensegrity of the body. The fascia is inert and cannot move by itself but must depend on the muscles for movement. Once the fascia becomes shortened, it will pull the bones out of alignment. Corresponding nerves, ligaments and organs will then be affected as well. Once the integrity of the tensegrity system begins to falter, a host of other significant maladies might begin to occur.**

## Fascia Hardens

**Fascia is a saran wrap like substance that surrounds and passes through each and every muscle, (as well as many other parts of our bodies). The surrounding fascia will begin to harden like glue as the muscles remain tightened and shortened for a long duration. This hardening prevents the muscles from completely relaxing as well.**

**The fascia and surrounding muscle tissue in your back begins to harden and dry out. Once this happens, your fascia and muscles start to take on a "beef jerky" like quality. Movement is necessary to keep the body's tissues hydrated. A dried out muscle and fascia system begins to feel congested and stringy. The ability for the tissues to accept nutrients and remove waste products is hampered as fluids dry up. In addition, the ability of energy to be transported through the tissues becomes compromised.**

**The tight muscles and shortened fascia will consequently pull the bones in the spine closer together. One of the primary purposes of bones is to provide a place for muscles and fascia to anchor onto. The cable system of the body, (as represented by the muscles and fascia), connects to the bones. This myofascial network will begin to pull the bones closer to each other if the muscles and the network of fascia are already shortened and tightened**

**Bones are held in place by a balanced system of cables and pulleys, as represented by the muscle and fascia system. Any disruption in this system will create an imbalance in the bones. Bones do not move by themselves. Something is pulling on the bones. That something is the muscles and fascia. If shortened, the muscles and fascia will create havoc in the interconnectedness of the skeletal system.**

**You will begin to have physical changes starting to occur in the bones themselves as they begin to pull together. The spinal vertebrae are pressed together and the spongy cartilaginous disks that reside between each vertebra may begin to bulge out to one side. This is often called a "slipped disk" or a "bulging disk". The vertebrae in the spine often begin to grind together once most or all the fluid in the spongy cartilage spacer is pressed out by compression. This is referred to as**

**"*bone on bone*." Often called "*Crepitus*", this bone grinding on other bone begins to wear away the bone. At this point, a medical professional might label you as someone who has a medical condition frequently known as "arthritis".**

**Many people often shrink in size through the compression of their spinal vertebrae. This has little to do with aging. It does have to do with the forces that are squeezing the fluid out of the spongy spacers between the vertebrae and causing the vertebrae to be pressed together. (Once the pattern is corrected, this process can also be reversed and one's natural height returned.)**

**Within the spinal vertebrae emerge nerves that travel to remote areas of the body. As these nerves pass through the compressed disk space, they are often inflamed by the pressure around them. This is where most back pain is felt. The nerve does not have enough space to traverse from the spine freely. Often one of the primary nerves in the lower back is "pinched" in this compression sequence. This compression creates a knifelike pain that drops one to his knees in an instant. Any movement only adds to the agony. Pain or numbness shoots down one or both legs. This inflamed nerve is called the "Sciatic Nerve" and the condition is referred to as "Sciatica".**

**When most people experience extreme pain in their lower back they usually assume that they have a back problem. Often this diagnosis is referred to the term called "*Sciatica*" or sometimes a close relative "*Piriformis Syndrome*". Sciatica signifies that you do not just have normal back pain anymore. You are at an extreme level where a major nerve (the sciatic nerve), is being pressed upon and you begin to experience a numbness or tingling progressing down the leg. The pain can be excruciating and relentless, affecting someone at all times of day.**

**Most people create an assumption that that they have a back problem and they focus their attention on just treating the back. These treatments could be many different types of therapies like the following: surgery, heat, cold, fitness exercises or another type of manual therapy. Unfortunately, most people are mistaken and misdiagnosed by most medical professionals. Unbeknownst to most people, Sciatica is seldom just about the back. There is so much more involved that a mechanistic model is completely unaware of.**

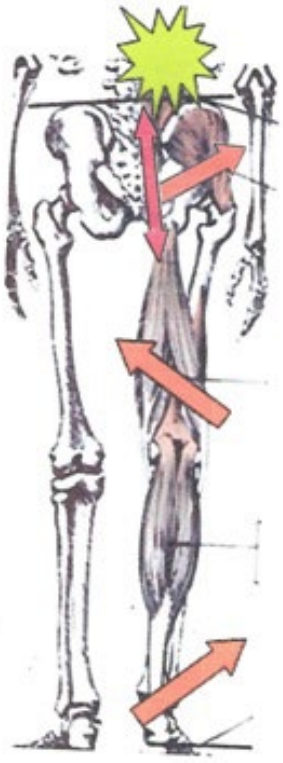
## Sciatica Is Seldom About the Back

**When it comes to Sciatica and most people, there is a rotation in the hip to an extent that one hip is often higher than the other and perhaps even rotated farther forward. The psoas muscle and its corresponding fascia are deeply involved in this disruption of the integrity of the body. As one leg rotates (most likely due to an old untreated lower leg or foot injury) the psoas muscle shortens in the groin region and the corresponding fascia pulls on the lumber spine.**

**The sciatic nerve, emerging from the lumbar spine, is now compressed either in the lower back (Sciatica) or in the hip region (Piriformis Syndrome).**

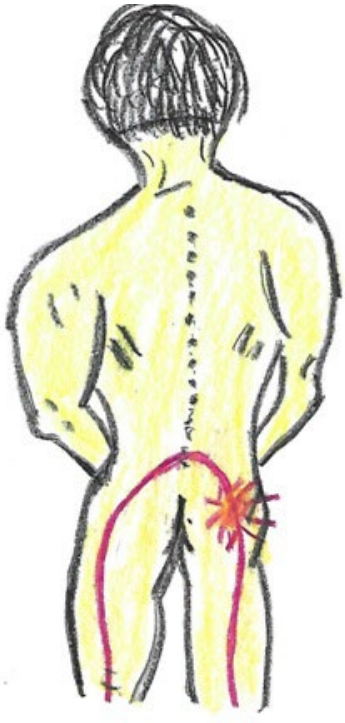
**I suffered with Sciatica for over thirty-five years. It all began in my early twenties and lasted for over three and a half decades. Every couple of months I would have another excruciating episode that could last for days or months on end.**

**I would religiously perform all the prescribed exercises from my health professionals. I cycled endless miles on a bicycle to strengthen the muscles around my knees. I tightened up my back muscles with swimming and weight training. I kept my core tight with numerous core strengthening exercises. All of these treatments were to no avail. Despite this rigorous prescription of tightening my body, there was no change. I was besieged by**



**Sciatica is most commonly caused by a rotated leg**

**Sciatica**
**Illustration by Jon Burras**



***Piriformis Syndrome***
**Illustration Jon Burras**

**regular painful Sciatica bouts that would cripple me for lengthy periods of time.**

**Frequent trips to the emergency room to reluctantly accept strong pain medication seemed like a waste of time as my problem was not being solved. All this anguish taught me to seek other answers.**

**As it turned out, I was misdiagnosed and mistreated by the mechanistic medical profession. I did not have a back problem. Instead, I discovered that I had a leg problem. I came to realize that old foot and ankle injuries from playing sports and overall living life as an active child had created a fascia imbalance in my left leg. My left leg was shorter than my right leg, had a corkscrew pattern in it and was pulling on my lumbar vertebrae in my lower back.**

**My fitness routine had not healed my Sciatica problem because (as I learned many years later) my back was not the problem. Shortened fascia from the bottom of my foot all the way up my leg and into my lower back was the actual source of my back pain. The mystery was finally solved. Decades of misguided treatments now needed to be reconciled.**

**Sciatica and Piriformis Syndrome are closely related. The Sciatic Nerve is involved in both issues. The common ground is that the muscles and fascia are too tight in a deviated pattern causing the hips to be imbalanced. One hip could be higher than the other or rotated farther forward than the other. As the hips shift due to muscle and fascia tightness, the lower back muscles are compressed and the nerve might become entrapped. With Sciatica, the nerve is compressed in the lower lumbar region of the back and in Piriformis Syndrome, the nerve is squeezed tightly in the hip region. The Sciatic nerve becomes cut off as it passes through a tiny muscle called the Piriformis, deeply seated beneath the gluteus region,**

**Both of these conditions (Sciatica and Piriformis Syndrome) have nothing to do with aging, gender, muscle weakness, lack of core strength or being "out of shape". They are the result of the tensegrity of the body being disrupted by shortened fascia somewhere in the leg or foot causing spirals and rotations in the leg. This spiraling and shortening ultimately ends up in the back.**

**These conditions are not a bone issue or a nerve issue at all. Any diagnosis like "slipped disk", "herniated disk", "Sciatica" etc. is only blaming the symptoms and not identifying the root causes.**