

FACTS

41 per cent of women apply body or hand moisturizer a minimum three times a day.



Alternate medicine

How to beat sciatica

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Sciatica, *Gridhrasi* in Ayurveda, is characterised by **sharp pain** radiating from the hip up to the thigh, calf or the toes in one or both the legs. **Numbness, weakness, tingling sensation and discomfort** along the path of the sciatic nerve are the symptoms. These are results of compression, irritation and inflammation of the Sciatic nerve. The most common causes are lumbar herniated disc, lumbar spinal stenosis, degenerative disc disease, ageing, osteoporosis, spondylitis, pelvic infections, tumours, diabetic neuropathies etc.

Majority of these patients show a history of **lifting heavy weights** on their head or back, adopting **improper spinal postures** while sitting or bending forward, **riding two-wheelers** on bumpy roads and in female patients, **standing for a long time** in kitchens. All these contribute to the unbearable and excruciating pain.

Ayurveda believes that sciatica is caused by the aggravation of *vayu* (the air which is responsible for the movement of muscles and the sensation of the nerves). Sometimes, the vitiation of *kapha* (phlegm and the body fluids) along with *vata* brings on the attack. At times, constipation aggravates sciatica.

The perfect prescription for *gridhrasi* includes:

DIETARY REGIMEN

Pulses, beans and fried foods should be prohibited. Curds and other sour substances should be avoided. **Saffron**, in small quantities, should be mixed with **milk** and given to the patient to drink.

LIFE STYLE REGIMEN

Exposure to dampness should be avoided. The patient should use a **hard bed** and wear a lumbo-sacral belt.

Yogic exercises like **Halasana** (plow pose — improves circulation of blood and lymph, stimulates the immune system and releases stress and tension in the lower back), **Shalabhasana** (locust pose — strengthens the core body and the lower back muscles. It also stimulates the endocrine, nervous



Ayurvedic treatment on lower back works well

and reproductive systems) and **Bhujangasana** (cobra pose — this posture develops the strength and flexibility in the spine and rejuvenates spinal nerves) may be undertaken after pain has subsided to prevent recurrence of sciatica.

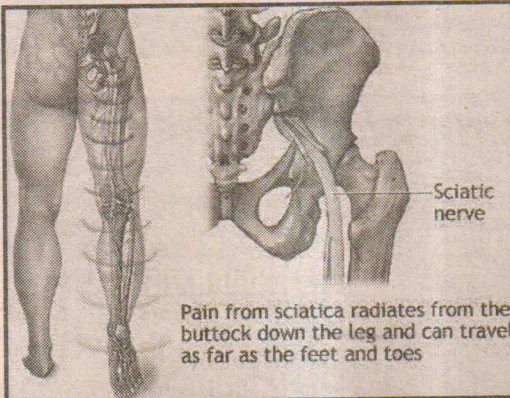
INTERNAL MEDICATIONS

Include many types of ayurvedic preparations like *thailams*, *grithams*, pills, *lehyams*, *churnams*, *asavaaristams* and *kashayams* prepared from herbs like **Raasna**, **Aswagandha**, **Dasamoola**, **Satavari** etc.

EXTERNAL THERAPIES

Include *panchakarma* and other rejuvenation therapies. **Abhyangam** (a whole body massage with specific herbal oils), **Nadi Swedam** (medicated steam bath), **Pizhichil** (medicated oil bath), **Kati vasthi** (a treatment done on to the back to decrease spinal compression), **Vasthi** (medicated enema), **Virech anam** (purgation) and other procedures for a period of 7/14/21/28 days are recommended.

(The author is the director of Kerala Ayurvedic Care)



Pain from sciatica radiates from the buttock down the leg and can travel as far as the feet and toes

Fake version acupuncture just as good

A sham version of acupuncture works just as well for treating migraine headaches as the real

thing, and both fake and real acupuncture work better than no treatment at all, a new study has found. In the study, German researchers divided 302 migraine sufferers into three groups. The patients were told that one group would receive acupuncture “similar



to the acupuncture treatment used in China,” and that the second would receive a type of acupuncture that did not follow the Chinese principles but “has been associated with positive outcomes in clinical studies.” The patients did not know which group they were assigned to. A third group was put on a waiting list and received treatment later. Although the patients in the second group were unaware of it, they received a faked version of acupuncture. The treatments went on for 12 weeks and success was defined as having 50 per cent fewer days with headaches. Finally, real acupuncture succeeded with 51 per cent and the sham procedure succeeded with 53. (NYT)

DID YOU KNOW

- The “funny bone” is not a bone. It’s the spot where the ulnar nerve touches the humerus.
- If an identical twin grows up without having a certain tooth, the other twin will also grow up with that tooth missing.
- In Czech Republic, there is a church that has a chandelier made of human bones.