



# Prenatal Sciatica

Massage is one of the most helpful strategies for prenatal sciatica. But, first, take this little quiz to see if you have sciatica.

1. Is your pain only on one side?
2. Is your pain primarily in your buttock, back of your thigh, calf and foot?
3. There can also be some referred pain to your hip, low back or crotch.
4. Is your pain worse after sitting for a long time?
5. Do you have tingling or numbness in your buttock or down your leg?

It's always a good idea to check with your doctor or midwife beforehand to get a proper diagnosis; but, if you answered yes to at least two questions, you probably do have sciatica and need some relief right now.



## Massage can be a very effective strategy for Prenatal Sciatica.

Here's what our Sage Spa Certified Prenatal Massage Therapist will do to help you:

- (1) Your therapist will find the trigger points, those especially irritated areas in your buttocks, legs and hips, and extinguish them. Extinguish may sound a little drastic but actually feels fantastic and reduces pain.
- (2) Your therapist will find the shortened muscles or your pregnant posture and they will warm and stretch them until you sigh with relaxation and relief.
- (3) Your therapist will show you a great stretch for sciatica called the tailor stretch so that you can keep ahead of the problem at home (or at work or out for coffee or wherever).
- (4) Your therapist will teach you the most neutral positioning for resting and sleeping so that your aggravated muscles can rest.

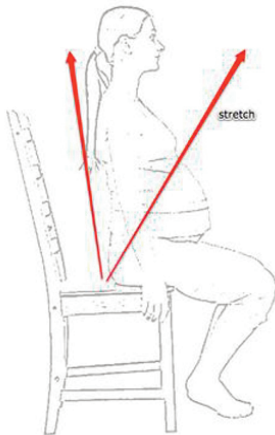
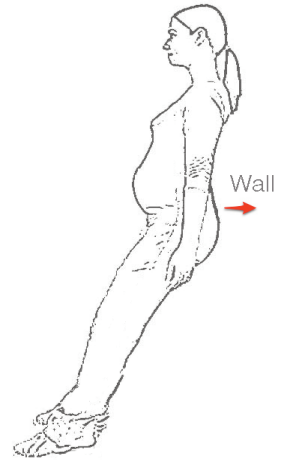


# Prenatal Sciatica: Stretch & Strengthen

This is the 4th in our series on strategies to help you deal with prenatal sciatica. This section is about stretching and strengthening. The most important thing to keep in mind is that stretching and strengthening should be thought of together not as either/or. While it's useful to stretch, too much stretching without strengthening can make muscles lax. Too much strengthening without stretching can make muscles bulky and tight, unable to respond to a sudden effort on your part, and more liable to injury. As you do the exercises below, you should alternate a stretch with a strength-building move.

## Wall Sit

Lean your back against a wall. Walk your feet out between 1 and 2 feet. Let your back slide down the wall until your thighs are at about a 30 degree angle with your calves. Caution: You do NOT want a right angle between thighs and calves as this puts too much strain on your knees. Try to hold this posture for 1 minute. When done, sit in a chair for a tailor stretch of the right leg.



## Tailor Stretch

First, find a very solid chair that will not tip over. Sit with your sit bones near the front of the chair. Cross your right ankle over your left leg. Sit very tall and slowly lean forward. IMPORTANT: Do not lean forward with a bent over spine. Lean forward with a straight spine as if you are a tall tree. Lean until you feel the stretch in your right hip. Hold and breathe for 1 minute. Slowly come back to upright. Go back to the wall for another minute of wall sit. Do the Tailor Stretch for the left leg.

## Yoga Warrior Posture

Take a lunge position with right leg forward and left leg back with the back foot angled a bit forward. (see picture at right) It is recommended that, when you do this for the first time, you hold on to a sturdy chair, table, back of the couch, etc. Your thigh and calf should be at an angle of about 30 degrees to each other. CAUTION: Do not go any deeper as this can put a strain on your knee. Bring your right arm forward and level to the floor and your left arm back and level to the floor. Try to hold and breathe for about 1 minute. If you're not able to hold that long at first, slowly work your way up to it. Repeat with left leg forward.



## Meditation Posture

You will need a nice sturdy cushion to put under your sit bones. Sit towards the front of the cushion with legs crossed (see diagram) and with your palms resting downward on your legs. Sit with your back nice and straight and tall and let your legs fall towards the floor. Notice your breath. Try to let your breath go into the cranky areas of your back or the rest of your body. Stay for as long as you like but 10 minutes would be a nice minimum time. This is YOUR time for YOU. NOTE: If your sciatica causes you pain in this position, you can sit with your back to a wall or sit on a firm couch or chair instead.

# Semi-Reclining Position for Prenatal Comfort and for Your Massage Session

Semi-reclining position is a safe and ergonomically sound position that you can use during your pregnancy for:

- Receiving massage (you can get great neck work as well as belly work).
- Easier breathing in the latter months of your pregnancy.
- Relief from typical prenatal musculoskeletal strains.
- Napping.
- Sleeping.

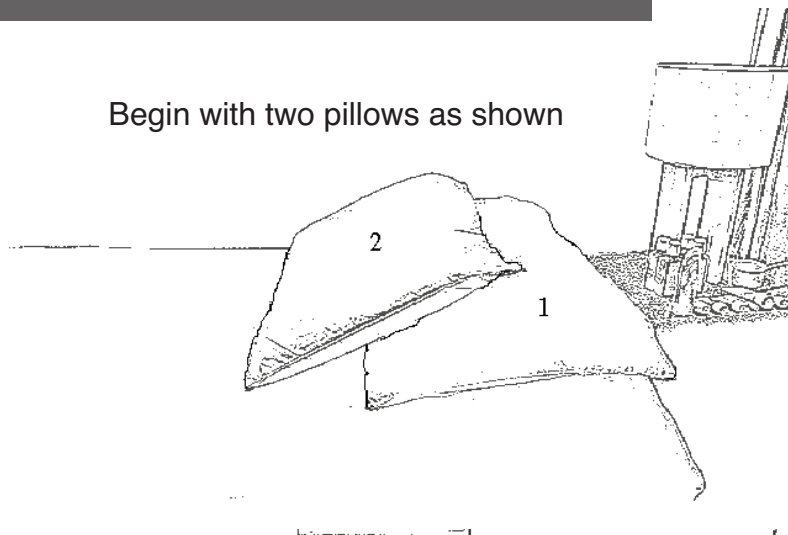
NOTE: If you have sciatica, this position may not work for you. Sidelying position might be a better choice. See page 2.

You will need:

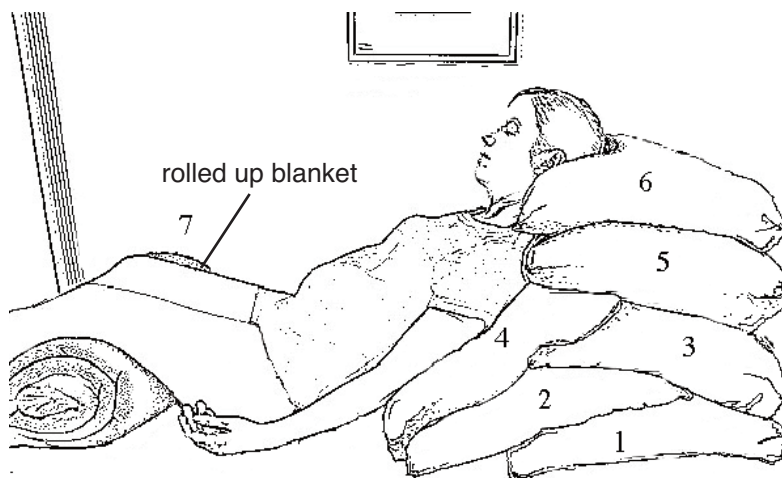
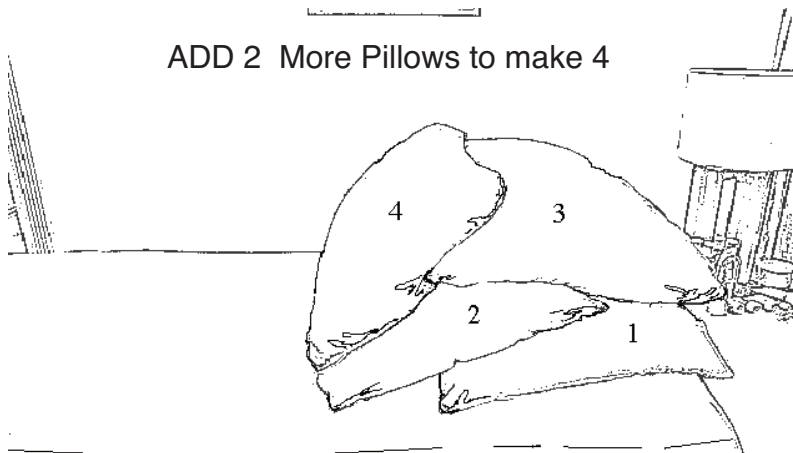
- At least 6 pillows, regular and/or king (taller or longer-torsoed people may need one more pillow)
- One blanket

Follow the directions to the right to set up your position perfectly. If you need a tutorial, feel free to ask your therapist. It IS important that your body be high enough on your pillows so that you open your ribcage away from your pelvis, giving you more room to breathe and avoiding any indigestion that can occur if your stomach is “squished.”

Begin with two pillows as shown



ADD 2 More Pillows to make 4



ADD yet 2 More Pillows & rolled blanket to finish to position

# Sidelying Position for Prenatal Comfort and for Your Massage Session

Side-lying position is a safe and ergonomically sound position that you can use during your pregnancy for:

Receiving massage (it allows your massage therapist good access to your lower back and to the area between your shoulder blades).

Relief from lower back pain and sciatica.

- Napping.
- Sleeping.

NOTE: If you have already have hip pain the semi-reclining position may be a better choice for you.

You will need:

At least 5 pillows

Follow the directions to the right to set up your position perfectly. If you need a tutorial, feel free to ask your therapist. It IS important that you position the abdominal pillow in a way that supports your abdomen but takes the weight off your shoulder and hip. This way you will avoid any soreness due to pressure.

