

Active life doesn't have to lead to hip replacement

By Robert Rupp

Most of us live an active lifestyle. But sometimes we forget about the long-term effects of our exercise programs or sports. We may pay attention to our backs, knees and shoulders, but the hip is a vital bone that sometimes gets ignored.

Hip pressure and pinching of the ball and socket through range of motion can cause hip impingement, a condition that involves extra bone formation around the hip joint.



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What does hip impingement feel like? People who have hip impingement often report pain in the front of their hip or in the groin region. This pain is usually aggravated with prolonged sitting or walking or rotation of the hip. Occasionally the pain can involve the side of the hip and radiate down the thigh. A click or catch in certain positions may occur in the hip joint, especially if the cartilage labrum, which functions as a seal surrounding the hip socket, becomes torn through injury.

The cause. A normal hip joint has a round ball moving in a round socket, but a hip with impingement has an oval shaped ball moving in a socket with an overhanging bone spur. These

abnormal bone shapes cause injury to the joint cartilage, and the wear and tear process can lead to hip arthritis and pain, breaking down the normally smooth cartilage coating and protecting the hip joint. Our bodies do not repair or replace the cartilage.

It is not known why some people have this extra bone in their hip joint that causes impingement, but it is thought that it develops during childhood or after trauma.

Diagnosis. X-rays or an MRI scan of the hip, in addition to an evaluation by a physician, can be used to diagnose a hip impingement condition.

What happens if I have hip impingement?

Treatment starts with activity modifications, medications and therapy. Hip injections also can be used to treat joint inflammation and pain. If symptoms persist or if the impingement process is destroying the joint, hip arthroscopy is an option.

How can I get “hip” with arthroscopy?

Hip arthroscopy is an outpatient hip joint through small skin incisions using a camera and special surgical tools to treat any injured tissue and remove excess bone. Reshaping the hip to a normal round ball or removing loose fragments stops the destructive process of hip impingement and usually improves hip pain.

Don't ignore your pain. If hip impingement continues without treatment, the result can be an arthritic hip with a bone-on-bone condition that requires a hip replacement for pain relief. Hip arthroscopy can stop the process of impingement before it leads to arthritis.

People living with chronic hip pain might be ignoring progressive hip injury and the development of arthritis. Hip

arthroscopy is not successful if the arthritis process becomes too advanced. It is important for anyone with hip pain to have an accurate diagnosis by a physician experienced in treating hip conditions.

Call (775) 589.8950 to learn more.

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