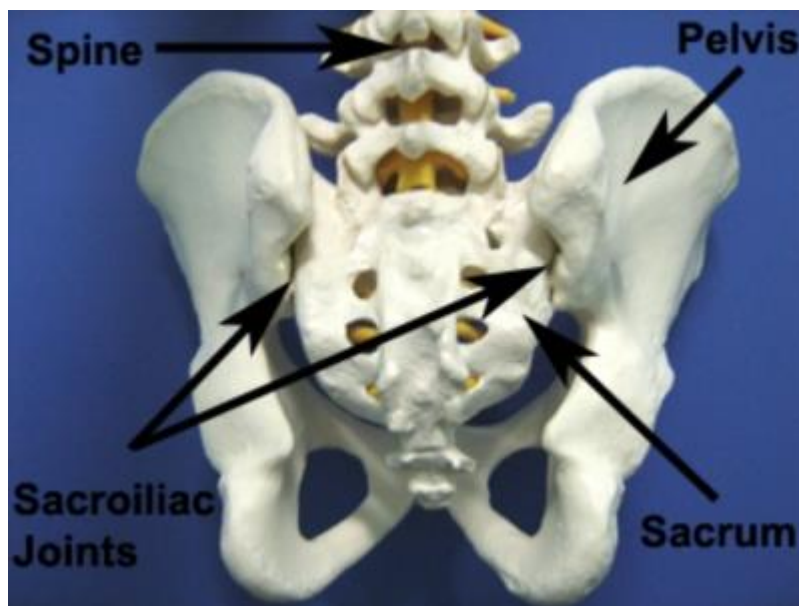


# Sacroiliac Joint Dysfunction

## What is sacroiliac joint dysfunction?

The sacroiliac joint is located in the lower part of the back and joins the tail bone (sacrum) to one of the pelvic bones (ilium). There are two sacroiliac joints – one on either side of the spine, and they transfer weight from the spine to the pelvis and allow a small amount of movement to occur. During certain movements of the spine and hips, stretching or compressive forces are placed on the sacroiliac joints and surrounding ligaments. If these forces are excessive and beyond what the sacroiliac joint can withstand, injury to the sacroiliac joint may occur.



**Figure 1 – The Sacroiliac Joints**

This can be from bending, sitting, lifting, arching or twisting movements of the spine, or, from weight bearing forces associated with running or jumping. Injury to the sacroiliac joint may occur from an isolated incident or due to repetitive or prolonged forces over time. Sacroiliac joint dysfunction is often associated with asymmetry of the pelvis due to muscle tightness, joint stiffness, or joint laxity particularly with pregnancy.

## Signs and symptoms of sacroiliac joint dysfunction

As a general rule, pain is usually experienced on one side, around the top of the buttock sometimes with referral into the lower buttock, groin or thigh. Occasionally, pain may be felt on both sides of the lower back. Symptoms are generally exacerbated with lower back or hip movements e.g. rolling over in bed, putting on or taking off shoes / socks, walking up and down stairs, or with running. Tenderness is usually felt over the sacroiliac joint.

## Prognosis of sacroiliac joint dysfunction

The recovery time for sacroiliac joint dysfunction may vary from patient to patient depending on compliance with physiotherapy. With ideal treatment, patients may be pain free in as little as several days, although typically this may take 2 – 3 weeks. It is important to note, however, that injured tissue takes approximately six weeks to restore the majority of its strength in ideal healing conditions. Care must therefore be taken when returning to activity during this period.