

Lumbar Strain

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A lumbar strain is an injury to the lower back that results in stretching or tearing of the lumbar muscle and damage to the tendons. This often results in muscle “spasm” and is a very common cause of low back pain. Many people will experience this at some point in their lifetime.

Lumbar muscle strains most commonly occur with some sort of pushing, pulling, lifting or twisting injury. Usually the patient can recall when it happened and it is sometimes described as “my back went out”. Pain usually remains in the low back without radiation down the legs.

Your sports medicine physician makes the diagnosis after discussing your symptoms and performing a physical examination. Occasionally, further investigation may be necessary (xray, CT, MRI) in order to rule out other, more serious conditions. The doctor may provide a prescription for anti-inflammatory medication or muscle relaxants and recommend physical therapy. A manual practitioner may also help speed the resolution of your symptoms. Your doctor may recommend short-term rest (up to 48 hrs), though being more active seems to help people return to their activities more quickly than those with complete rest.

The goal of the physician is to have their patients return to sports or work as quickly and as safely as possible. Most people will have complete resolution of their symptoms and return to their normal activities in several weeks to several months.