

A photograph of a man and a woman walking away from the camera on a dirt path. They are holding hands. The path is surrounded by trees and bushes, with sunlight filtering through the leaves. The scene is peaceful and natural.

# Florida Orthopaedic Institute's approach to spine-related conditions



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# Spine Surgery at Florida Orthopaedic Institute

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The vast majority of patients get better with non-operative measures, whether that be through our integrative physical therapy or with referrals to our non-operative spine specialists.

There are a number of benefits for choosing Florida Orthopaedic Institute to keep you active with regards to spine surgery. We have several spine surgeons located throughout Tampa Bay who can operate out of our two outpatient Surgery Centers as well as hospitals throughout the area.

An additional benefit is integrating prescribed physical therapy through Florida Orthopaedic Institute's specially-trained physical therapists to help return you to the activities you were performing before the condition we are treating. Before any surgery, all non-operative measures are exhausted.

All Florida Orthopaedic Institute's spine surgeons are fellowship trained in the various spine surgeries and are skilled at discussing the alternatives with you. Through shared decision-making, we are committed to discovering what type of surgery would best meet the goals of the individual patient - whether it be performed in an outpatient setting or a hospital. Our goal is to get you back doing the activities you enjoy.

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**Florida Orthopaedic Institute surgeons use the latest and state-of-the-art advancements in spine surgery.**

If your condition warrants a surgical procedure, our surgeons have expertise in both conventional and minimally invasive methods. Through a discussion with the patient, we decide together what best fits your individual needs. Trust and communication are of utmost importance between a surgeon and the patient.

Our goal is to develop a relationship where we identify your goals and understand the best ways for you to reach them. Typically non-operative measures are used first, since the majority of our patients will get better without surgery.

A non-operative technique, for example, would be using our integrative physical therapy model. If non-operative measures are not successful, we discuss the surgical procedure options with you using the latest and state-of-the-art advancements in spine surgery.





# Spine Surgery at Florida Orthopaedic Institute

An example of a spine-related treatable condition is Sciatica. Sciatica is an incredibly common symptom and represents upwards of 75% of the patients with leg pain. The term “sciatica” is a broad term that can mean any number of things to different patients. In a nutshell, it refers to discomfort that travels down the leg. It can be felt as a sharp burning or stabbing pain, spasms or even numbness and tingling that goes down the leg causing weakness. The symptoms are encompassed in the term sciatica, which in itself is not a diagnosis but rather a symptom of what is going on in the leg.





Sciatica is self-limited, meaning that the vast majority of patients experiencing the symptoms get better on their own. 75% to 90% of the diagnosis is to identify what is causing the symptom of sciatica.

The first diagnostic step is an x-ray of the lumbar spine. An x-ray allows us to determine if there is any inappropriate movement and if the bones are not lined up correctly. The diagnosis process may also require what's called an MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging). MRIs help examine the soft tissues of the spine, including the discs, as well as additional soft tissues such as the ligaments. We're able to look at the MRI results in conjunction with the x-rays to see what may be causing the sciatica symptom.

## All About Sciatica

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The vast majority of patients with sciatica symptoms get better on their own.

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**80%-85% of patients respond positively to physical therapy and epidural steroid injections.**

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The end diagnosis may be a disk herniation, spinal stenosis or spondylolisthesis. For patients who reporting pain within the last 4-6 weeks, they are typically referred to the Florida Orthopaedic Institute therapy team. Physical therapy focuses on core strengthening and stretching exercises, and alleviates most patients' pain. If persistent discomfort from symptoms of inflammation around the nerves extends beyond 6-12 weeks, we look to try to alleviate the pain in other ways. One of the more common treatments is an epidural steroid injection.

If the pain traveling down the leg returns after completing the physical therapy program and receiving a steroid injection, conventional or minimally invasive surgery may be necessary. This typically occurs in only 15%-20% of patients, with 80%-85% responding positively to physical therapy and injections.





## All About Sciatica



## **Conventional & Minimally Invasive Spine Surgery**



“Minimally invasive spine surgery has smaller incisions, and decreases soft tissue damage.”

#### **HOW DOES MINIMALLY INVASIVE SPINE SURGERY DIFFER FROM CONVENTIONAL SPINE SURGERY?**

One of the main differences with minimally invasive spine surgeries is the ability to do traditional spine surgeries through smaller incisions. This is accomplished by using special instruments such as microscopes and tubular retractors. Not only does minimally invasive surgery result in smaller incisions, but it also decreases soft tissue destruction and damage. Additional patient benefits include reduced hospital stays, lowered infection rates, quicker return to work and play and an overall better outcome.

#### **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MINIMALLY INVASIVE SPINE SURGERY?**

Minimally invasive spine surgery can be done in a number of different settings. It can be performed at an outpatient surgery center or in a hospital setting where a patient can stay if necessary. Choosing where to have the surgery is patient dependent. A number of different factors are examined such as age, chronic diseases, general conditions and the type of surgery that is best for the patient. Florida Orthopaedic Institute has two outpatient Surgery Centers and is affiliated with many hospitals across Tampa Bay.



## **HOW ELSE DOES MINIMALLY INVASIVE SPINE SURGERY DIFFER FROM CONVENTIONAL SPINE SURGERY?**

Conventional spine surgery can be used to treat every spine condition to date while minimally invasive surgery is currently designed to effectively treat a select number of conditions. Most of these conditions have to do with radiculopathy or sciatic-type pain or pain that shoots down the arm. Those are the most reliable and effective means by which minimally invasive spine surgery can help get patients back to what they enjoy doing.

Another very important consideration when making the selection is the spine surgeon's expertise. At Florida Orthopaedic Institute, our spine surgeons have been trained by some of the best surgeons in the world in both conventional and minimally invasive techniques. Our spine surgeons maintain an honest and flowing conversation about what technique best fits each patient's needs.



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Conventional spine surgery can be used for every spine condition, while minimally invasive is designed for a select number of conditions.

## Conventional & Minimally Invasive Spine Surgery

### WHAT COMMON CONDITIONS IS MINIMALLY INVASIVE SPINE SURGERY USED FOR?

Many of the conditions treated with conventional spine surgery can also be treated with minimally invasive spine surgery. Common conditions that can be considered for minimally invasive surgery include disk herniation in the lumbar or the cervical spine, the neck or the low back causing sciatic type pain or shooting pain down the arm. Spinal stenosis, which is narrowing of the spinal canal, and spondylolisthesis, where two bones are moving inappropriately along each other, have experienced great success with minimally invasive techniques.



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