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## Understanding Sacroiliac Pain: A Self-Care Guide

When people come to me complaining of “SI Joint Pain”, they are usually experiencing one-sided pain in the very low back. Unlike diffuse pain across the entire low back, a person can generally point to the epicenter of their pain. It is possible for the joint between the sacrum and ilium to become inflamed, so an acupuncture treatment is a good idea. You may also be experiencing referred pain from a variety of trigger points in the low back and glutes. Acupuncture can help with this as well, but so can some self-massage at home.

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## The Connection Between Trigger Points and Acupuncture

Trigger points are small, sensitive areas in your muscles that can cause pain both at the point itself and in other areas of your body (referred pain). These points often correspond with traditional acupuncture points, which isn't surprising given our growing understanding of how the body's myofascial (muscle and connective tissue) system overlaps with traditional acupuncture meridians. When you apply pressure to these points, you stimulate the same nerve fibers that respond to acupuncture needles, making self-massage a powerful tool for home care.

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## Getting Started with Self-Massage

The key to effective self-massage is gentle, sustained pressure rather than aggressive rubbing. You'll need a massage ball - while a tennis ball works to start, I recommend the Yoga Tune Up therapy balls for their durability and perfect density. When working on a point:

- Start with light pressure and gradually increase as the tissue releases
- If you find yourself holding your breath, that's a sign you're using too much pressure
- Spend no more than a couple of minutes on each area.
- Repeat every 2-3 days
- If you experience any nerve sensations (tingling, numbness, or sharp pain), adjust the position of the ball

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## Key Areas to Address

#1 Points along the spine and sacrum in the area that hurts. Trigger points in the deep and superficial spinal muscles can cause pain in this region.

#2 Points in the glute muscles, paying special attention to the top of the pelvis, moving out to the side of the hip, center of the glute, and near your sit bone. Two muscles in this area that often contribute to back pain in this area are the piriformis and gluteus medius. Pay special attention to this area if you get pain or numbness that travels into your hip and/or leg.

#3 Points in the quadratus lumborum. Look for points between the top of your pelvis and your bottom rib, farther out from your spine.

See the illustration below for some common trigger points that can contribute to “SI Pain”. The links on the right are to some helpful videos.

[Low Back](#)

[Glutes](#)

[Piriformis](#)

[QL](#)

