

NEWS LESSON

Do Your Hips Hold Stress?

BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Have you ever heard someone say that a part of the body holds stress? What did they say?
2. Where in your body do you feel tension when you are stressed?
3. Do you stretch or exercise to feel better? What do you do?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**wellness**	☐	A	facts that show something is true
2	**evidence**	☐	B	a person who helps injured people move well again
3	**physiotherapist**	☐	C	the state of being healthy in body and mind
4	**anxiety**	☐	D	a place where things are kept
5	**discomfort**	☐	E	a feeling of mild pain or of being uncomfortable
6	**tendons**	☐	F	strong cords that join muscles to bones
7	**scans**	☐	G	a worried and nervous feeling
8	**storage**	☐	H	pictures of the inside of the body made by a machine

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Many people say that hips store stress and old feelings. Experts say the truth is more complicated, and that hip pain needs a careful look.

1 In yoga classes, on TikTok and in many wellness spaces, you may hear that "your hips hold tension". The idea is that the hips are a storage box for stress and even trauma, and that stretching them can let out those feelings. In October 2026, The Guardian asked experts whether there is any truth in it.

2 The experts say stress and muscles are connected, but the hips are not special. When you feel tension, there are two main possible reasons. One is mechanical: some muscles resist stretching even when they are relaxed. The other is that muscles and nerves are working more than they need to, and this often happens under stress.

3 However, the evidence that mental strain affects muscles is strongest for the shoulders, the jaw and the pelvic floor, not the hips. People who have been through trauma, especially as children, are more likely to have long-term pain. There is no evidence that this is more true for the hips. Greg Lehman, a physiotherapist who teaches clinicians about pain, says there is nothing special about the hip.

4 So where does hip discomfort come from? Sometimes it is the shape of the body. Dr Abby Cheng, a sports doctor in the United States, says people with very shallow or very deep hip sockets tend to have more pain. Irritated tendons on the outside of the hip are another cause. Also, "tight hips" can mean pain, pulling or stiffness, and the feeling may come from the buttocks or back. Stress, poor sleep and anxiety can tip the balance and make pain more noticeable.

5 What helps? Start by moving more. If walking or gentle stretching makes the tightness better, it is probably muscular and not dangerous. Do not stretch too hard, because going too far can hurt more. Regular exercise and strength training twice a week also help. There is no one-size-fits-all answer.

6 Get help if the tightness does not improve with movement, or if it gets worse the more you move. Look for a doctor who checks your whole body and asks about stress and sleep. Scans can sometimes help, but they usually do not show exactly why you hurt. If the discomfort stays, learning to make peace with it can sometimes make it easier to live with.

Sources: The Guardian, Do we really 'hold tension' in our hips?; Journal of Psychosomatic Research, Is there a relationship between psychological stress or anxiety and chronic nonspecific neck-arm pain in adults? A systematic review and meta-analysis. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. The idea that hips store stress is popular in wellness spaces. T F NG
2. The evidence that mental strain affects muscles is strongest for the hips. T F NG
3. Stress, poor sleep and anxiety can make pain more noticeable. T F NG
4. The text says you should stretch as hard as you can. T F NG
5. The text says how many people in the world have hip pain. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

careful	complicated	improve	irritated	mental	muscular	shape

1. The rules of the game look simple, but they are really quite _____ .
2. After the long walk, the skin on her heel was red and _____ .
3. If your back pain does not _____ after two weeks, see a doctor.
4. Doctors say the _____ of your body can affect how much pain you feel.
5. Before you try new exercises, take a _____ look at what your body can do.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. In October 2026, The Guardian _____ experts whether there is any truth in it. (ASK)
2. People who have _____ through trauma, especially as children, are more likely to have long-term pain. (BE)
3. When I was younger, I _____ yoga every Saturday. (DO)
4. She _____ a sore shoulder after the long flight. (GET)
5. My doctor _____ me to walk more every day. (TELL)

7 Language focus: collocations

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. A collocation is a pair of words that naturally go together. Look at the word you can see and ask which partner sounds right next to it.

body	habit	lesson	peace	sleep	strain	training

1. Doing strength _____ twice a week is good advice for the hips.
2. Stress and a bad night's _____ can make pain more noticeable.
3. Stress can put extra _____ on your muscles.
4. Look for a doctor who checks your whole _____ .
5. Learning to make _____ with discomfort can make it easier to live with.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Do you think it is a good idea to follow health advice from yoga classes or social media? Why or why not?
2. What do you do when your body hurts, and when would you see a doctor?
3. Which advice in the text would be easiest for you to follow?

9 Role-play: a hip-opening class

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the yoga fan

Your yoga teacher says your hips hold stress. You want to book a hip-opening class. Explain why you believe it, and try to persuade your friend to come with you.

Student B · the sceptical friend

You've read that there's no good evidence for this idea. Ask your friend two questions about it, and suggest another way to feel better. You can agree, disagree or find a compromise.

Useful phrases

I've heard that your hips hold stress.
That's what my yoga teacher told me.
I'm not sure there's any proof.
Why don't we try a gentle walk first?
If it doesn't get better, we'll see a doctor.
Let's try it and see how we feel.

Afterwards, tell the class: what did you decide, and why?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 C · 2 A · 3 B · 4 G · 5 E · 6 F · 7 H · 8 D

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 T · 4 F · 5 NG

5 Vocabulary

1 complicated · 2 irritated · 3 improve · 4 shape · 5 careful

6 Verb forms

1 asked · 2 been · 3 did · 4 got · 5 told

7 Language focus

1 training · 2 sleep · 3 strain · 4 body · 5 peace

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