

Physiotherapy Department

Knee Pain



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This information leaflet has been produced by senior physiotherapists working at Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

It offers simple advice and exercises to help you manage your knee problem safely. Often the right advice and exercise is all that is needed.

Follow the advice and exercises with care. If any of the exercises makes your pain worse STOP and seek advice.

Causes

- Most knee pain is not due to a serious condition and will resolve with time.
- Knee pain can be caused by a twist or fall which may strain or sprain the ligaments, tendons or muscles.
- Knee pain can also be the result of overuse or repetitive strains.

Symptoms

You may be experiencing some or all of the following symptoms:

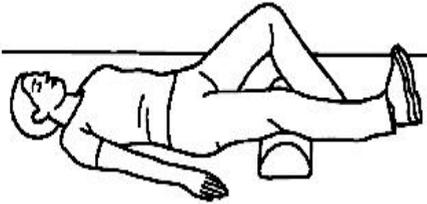
- pain
- swelling
- stiffness and / or loss of movement
- weakness in the muscles in the front of the thigh
- tension or tightness in the muscles in the back of the thigh and / or calf

Advice

- Painkillers (such as ibuprofen and / or paracetamol) may be prescribed by your GP and should be taken at the recommended dose.
- Cold packs (such as ice or frozen peas wrapped in a tea-towel) can also provide short-term pain relief. Apply to the knee for approximately 20 minutes. This can also help with the swelling.
- Rest is important immediately following injury, particularly for the first 24-72 hours; however during this time it is important to maintain flexibility of the knee. Gently bending and straightening the knee will help ensure it does not become stiff and will also help the healing process. If your knee pain is aggravated by particular activities, such as running, try resting from these activities until your symptoms improve.
- Elevate the leg when resting so that the ankle and knee are higher than the hip to help reduce the swelling.
- Early movement and exercise is important to help your knee recover as soon as possible. As soon as you are able, performing simple exercises can help improve the function of your knee. Moving stiff muscles and joints can be uncomfortable to start with but becomes easier as you regain the movement in your knee.

Exercises

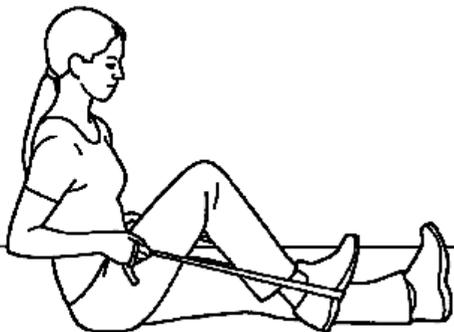
The following exercises should not increase your pain. If they do, stop. Perform each exercise gently and slowly, only moving as far as feels comfortable. If you have used ice, allow 30 minutes before exercising. Complete two to three times per day:



Lying on your back.
Place a cushion under your knee then pull your foot and toes up, tighten the thigh muscle and straighten the knee.

Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat 10 times, increasing to 20 and then 30 repetitions as you improve.

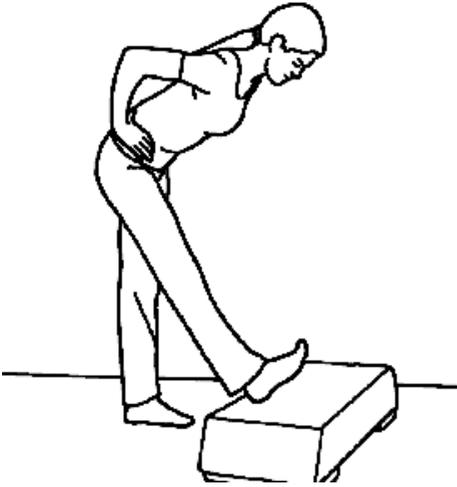
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Sitting up with your legs stretched out in front and a scarf or towel around your foot.
Bend your knee as far as possible. Gently pull the scarf to bend your knee a little more.

Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times.

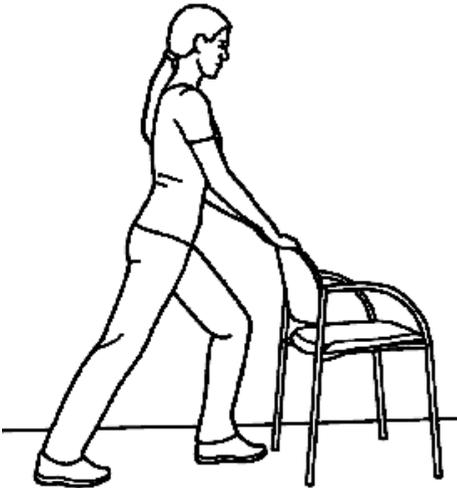
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And finally....

- If you cannot walk without a limp, try taking some stress off the knee by using a stick in the opposite hand to the painful knee.
- Wear sensible, well-fitting shoes or trainers.
- If you are over-weight you are putting more stress on your knee than if your weight is average.
- Pace your activities throughout the day to avoid flare-ups of symptoms.
- Try not to keep your knee still: it will get stiff and take longer to heal.

If your symptoms persist despite following the above advice, you may require some specialist advice and treatment from a physiotherapist.

Please ask if you
would like this leaflet
in larger print or an
alternative format.

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