

Knee injury

Information and advice

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This information is designed to supplement the advice given by your doctor, and is written by physiotherapists based on the latest medical advice.

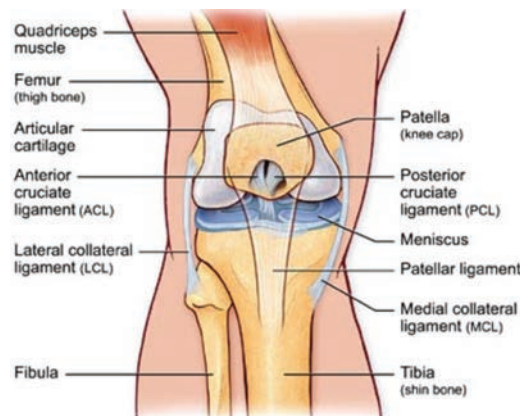
Knee injuries

Knees can be injured in many different ways, and can involve a number of different structures. For example:

- bone
- ligaments
- cartilage (meniscus)
- tendons
- muscles

Following a knee injury, you are likely to experience some or all of the following symptoms:

- pain
- swelling
- stiffness and/or loss of movement
- weakness of the thigh muscles
- tightness at the back of the knee



What can you do to help your knee?

Within the first 48 hours, the following may be useful:

- **Relative rest** – rest your knee for the first few days. Consider the use of crutches or a walking stick to help keep the weight off your injured knee. You can usually start some gentle exercises, (shown on next page), as long as this is not causing too much pain.
- **Ice** – this may help to ease any pain and swelling. Apply ice to the area for 10 minutes every three to four hours. A bag of frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel is the best. Please do not do this if your skin sensation is impaired. Never apply ice directly to the skin as it can cause burns.
- **Compression** – using a bandage can help limit swelling.
- **Elevation** – elevate your lower leg so that it rests higher than your hip. This aims to limit and reduce the swelling.

- **Medication** – can be taken to help ease the pain and swelling. Ask your GP or local pharmacist for advice.
- **Footwear** – wear sensible well fitting, cushioned shoes and avoid high heels.
- **Pace your activities** throughout the day – activity then rest, activity then rest.
- **Exercises** – once the pain allows, normally within the first few days, start to get the knee moving and try the following exercises. The aim of these exercises is to restore normal knee movement and to strengthen the muscles surrounding the knee. Start with the first three below. Once the initial pain has settled, try adding in options four, five and six.

(1) Push your knee into the floor by tightening up your thigh muscle – aim to get your knee as straight as you can.



Hold for five seconds, 10 times. Repeat two to three times a day.

(2) Bend and straighten the knee, aiming to increase the knee bend each time – use your hands to help with this movement initially.



Hold for five seconds, 10 times. Repeat two to three times a day.

(3) Place a rolled up towel under your knee. Push your knee down against the towel and straighten the knee.



Hold for five seconds, 10 times. Repeat two to three times a day.

(4) Sitting on a chair, tighten the thigh muscles and straighten the knee.

Hold for five seconds, 10 times. Repeat two to three times a day.



(5) Place the affected foot behind you.

Keeping the back leg straight, bend the front knee gently lunging forwards – feel the stretch in the back of the calf.

Hold for 20 seconds, four times.

Repeat twice a day.



(6) Place affected leg on a step. Lean forward, keeping the front leg slightly bent, feeling a stretch down the back of the leg

Hold for 20 seconds, four times. Repeat twice a day.



If you feel the exercises are making your pain worse, reduce the number or frequency of the exercises or stop and seek advice.

Physiotherapy may be helpful if the symptoms are not settling with the above advice. Ask your GP for further information regarding this.



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