

Home Exercise Program Login Instructions

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Clinician Notes

This handout contains general exercises for Patellofemoral Syndrome. No exercises should cause sharp, shooting or intense pain. Aching, stretching or discomfort may be present but should reduce over time as exercises are completed daily.

Progress through phase 1-3, taking 2-4 weeks per phase. If you progress to the next phase and experience pain/significant discomfort return to the earlier phase for another 1-2 weeks.

Your physician may recommend specific exercises within this program based on your diagnosis/condition.



Supine Hamstring Stretch with Doorway

HOLD: 90S | DAILY: 2 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1

Setup

Begin lying on your back in a doorway with your hips next to the doorframe.

Movement

Keeping your leg straight, raise your heel up onto the doorframe until you feel a gentle stretch in the back of your leg. Hold this position.

Tip

Make sure to keep breathing evenly and do not lock your knee during the stretch.



Hooklying Active Hamstring Stretch

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | HOLD: 30S | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phases 1, 2, and 3

Setup

Begin lying on your back with your legs straight.

Movement

Lift one leg to a 90 degree angle, grabbing the back of your leg just below your knee. Slowly straighten your leg as far as possible and hold this position. Then lower your leg back down and repeat.

Tip

Make sure keep your other leg straight on the ground and do not arch your low back during the stretch.



Sidelying Quadriceps Stretch

REPS: 1 | SETS: 1 | HOLD: 90S | DAILY: 2 | WEEKLY: 7

Phases 1, 2, and 3

Setup

Begin lying on your side with your legs straight.

Movement

Bend your upper leg, and grab hold of your foot to pull it toward your buttocks until you feel a stretch in the front of your thigh and hold.

Tip

Make sure not to let your hips tilt forward or backward.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Sidelying ITB Stretch

HOLD: 60S | DAILY: 2 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1

Setup

Begin lying on your side with the knees bent.

Movement

Place your bottom leg forward and your top leg backward with your knees bent. Place your bottom foot on top of your upper leg, and let it fall toward the ground until you feel a stretch on the outside of your leg.

Tip

Make sure to keep the thigh of your top leg in a line with your trunk.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Wall Quarter Squat

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1

Setup

Begin standing upright in front of a wall.

Movement

Lean back into a squat against the wall with your knees bent to 45 degrees, and hold this position.

Tip

Make sure your knees are not bent forward past your toes and keep your back flat against the wall during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Seated Isometric Knee Extension

REPS: 8 | SETS: 2 | HOLD: 10S | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1

Setup

Begin sitting upright in a chair.

Movement

Cross one leg in front of the other at your ankle. Try to straighten your back knee, pressing forward into your ankle and tightening your thigh muscles. Relax then repeat.

Tip

There should be no movement in this exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Beginner Bridge

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1

Setup

Begin lying on your back with your knees bent and feet resting flat on the floor.

Movement

Lift up through your pelvis as you exhale, inhale and slowly lower back down, and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to engage your core, maintain a neutral spine, and keep your upper back on the floor during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Hamstring Set with Swiss Ball

REPS: 8 | SETS: 2 | HOLD: 10S | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1

Setup

Begin lying on your back with both heels resting on a swiss ball.

Movement

Pull your heels down into the swiss ball, engaging the muscles on the back of your thigh. Hold briefly, then relax and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to keep your back flat against the ground during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Clamshell

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1

Setup

Begin lying on your side with your knees bent and your hips and shoulders stacked.

Movement

Engage your abdominals and raise your top knee up toward the ceiling, then slowly return to the starting position and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to keep your core engaged and do not roll your hips forward or backward during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Clamshell with Resistance

REPS: 12 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phases 2 and 3

Setup

Begin by lying on your side with your knees bent 90 degrees, hips and shoulders stacked, and a resistance loop secured around your legs.

Movement

Raise your top knee away from the bottom one, then slowly return to the starting position.

Tip

Make sure not to roll your hips forward or backward during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Standing Isometric Hip Abduction with Knee at 90 at Wall

REPS: 8 | SETS: 2 | HOLD: 10S | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phases 2 and 3

Setup

Begin in a standing upright position next to a wall.

Movement

Lift your knee up to a 90 degree angle, then gently press your whole leg against the wall. Hold briefly, then relax and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to keep your back straight and maintain your balance during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Sidelying Hip Abduction

REPS: 8 | SETS: 2 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phases 2 and 3

Setup

Begin lying on your side with your top leg straight and your bottom leg bent.

Movement

Lift your top leg up toward the ceiling, then slowly lower it back down and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to keep your leg straight and do not let your hips roll backward or forward during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Standing Hamstring Curl with Chair Support

REPS: 15 | SETS: 2 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phases 2 and 3

Setup

Begin standing with your hands resting on a stable surface or chair, and one leg slightly bent with your toes resting on the ground.

Movement

Bend your knee, lifting your foot off the ground, then return to the starting position and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to only bend at your knee and do not let your thigh move forward past your other leg during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Supine Bridge with Heels on Swiss Ball and Knees Bent

REPS: 10 | SETS: 2 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phases 2 and 3

Setup

Begin lying on your back with your knees bent, heels resting on a swiss ball, and your arms down by your sides.

Movement

Flex your feet, tighten your abdominals, and lift your hips off the ground into a bridge position, keeping your knees bent. Hold briefly, then slowly lower yourself back down and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to keep your abdominals tight during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Wall Squat

REPS: 2 | HOLD: 20S-2MINS | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phases 2 and 3

Setup

Begin in a standing upright position in front of a wall with your feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart.

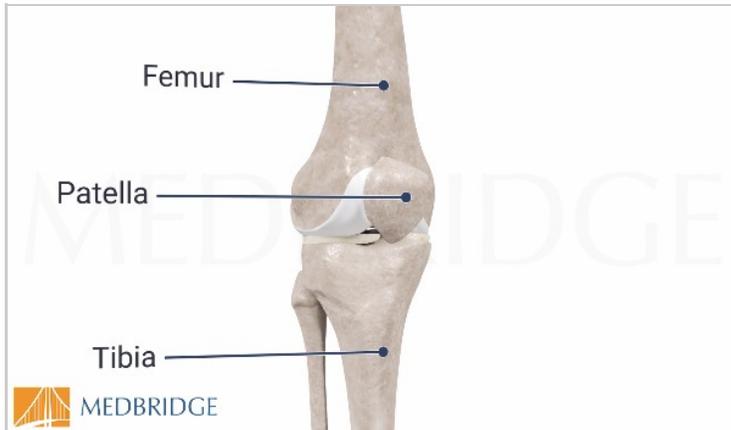
Movement

Lean back into a squat against the wall with your knees bent to 90 degrees, and hold this position.

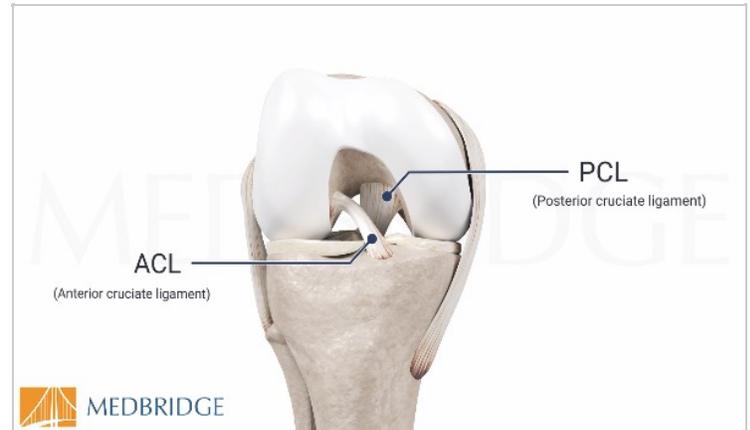
Tip

Make sure your knees are not bent forward past your toes and keep your back flat against the wall during the exercise.

Acute Knee Pain



Front of Knee: Bones



Front of Knee: ACL and PCL

Knee pain is a common occurrence that can happen after injury or overuse of your knee. Your knee is formed from the thighbone, or femur, the shinbone, or tibia, and the kneecap, or patella. The surfaces where the leg bones meet are covered with a smooth, shock-absorbing tissue called cartilage. This cartilage helps the joint to glide smoothly during movement.

The knee is connected by four ligaments. The two on the sides of the joint are called the lateral collateral ligament, or LCL, and the medial collateral ligament, or MCL. The two ligaments within the center of the knee are the anterior and posterior cruciate ligaments, often referred to as the ACL and PCL. When your knee is painful and swollen, your strength and range of motion in the knee is limited.

Recovery techniques and exercises will help you decrease pain and swelling, increase range of motion, and help you return to your normal activities as soon as possible.

In treatment, you may learn the R.I.C.E. principle:

R is for Rest. Avoid painful activities to give your knee time to heal. Limit walking and standing activities while your knee is painful and swollen.

I is for Ice. Apply ice for 20 minutes, up to once per hour. Place ice in a thin towel before placing it on your body.

C is for Compression. Your provider will show you how to apply a bandage or wrap to decrease the swelling and help the healing process.

E is for Elevation. Keep your knee elevated above the level of your heart as much as possible during the day to help reduce swelling and speed up your recovery.

Your provider may give you a walking aid or a brace to keep weight off your injured knee and support it while it heals. You will be given a home program that includes stretching and

strengthening exercises to help your knee recover.

Managing Knee Pain



Knee pain is very common; and it can happen for a variety of reasons. It may be the result of overuse (such as from running or playing sports), come on suddenly from an injury (such as a sprain or strain), or it may result from age-related wear and tear to the knee joint. Lifestyle factors play a role, too: stress, smoking, being overweight, and overall poor health can put you at greater risk for knee pain. If you have knee pain, you're not alone. It's a common complaint that affects people of all ages. If you've been diagnosed with osteoarthritis or have suffered a minor injury, it doesn't mean you'll always have knee pain. Especially early on, imaging tests like x-rays and MRIs are rarely necessary. It's important to realize that pain is your body's way of getting your attention and telling you to make a change. Your body has a network of nerves that carry messages between your body and your brain. Your nerves monitor different parts of your body and work like an alarm system to warn you and your brain of potential threats. If your brain senses a threat, it produces pain to tell your body to take action. Pain isn't something you need to be afraid of. Instead, think of pain as a signal to make a positive change. With good self-care, knee pain can often be improved within 4 to 6 weeks. There are simple and effective ways that you can treat your knee pain at home. These include **Healthy Lifestyle Changes; Exercise; Joint Protection Strategies; and Ice and Heat.** 1.

Healthy Lifestyle Changes First, being mindful of your overall health and wellness is important for reducing pain. Make sure to stay active, eat healthy food, get enough sleep, manage any chronic conditions, and stay up-to-date on preventive health screenings. Maintaining a healthy weight is also important - losing one pound of weight removes 4 pounds of pressure off your knees. Taking these steps will help you feel your best. **2. Exercise** Staying active and continuing to move within a pain-free range are particularly important for reducing knee pain since this promotes circulation, which helps with healing. Your hip and thigh muscles (also known as your gluteal and quadricep muscles) are the powerhouses of your leg. They help control the joint load, or how much force is put on or taken off the knee during activities. Keeping your leg muscles strong and flexible can help relieve pain and improve the function of your knee. If you haven't exercised in a while, don't try to do too much at once. Work up to 30 minutes of moderate, low-impact exercise at least 5 days per week. Choose activities you enjoy such as walking, biking, swimming, dancing, or yoga. In addition to these activities, there are also some strengthening exercises and stretches that will increase the strength and flexibility of your leg muscles to help relieve pain and make it easier to perform your daily activities. These strengthening exercises include quad sets, bridges, and clamshells, and the stretches include heel slides and a standing thigh stretch.

- **Quad Sets:** To do quad sets, begin sitting upright on the floor or bed with one leg straight and your other leg bent. Straighten your leg, pushing your knee down towards the floor or bed while you pull your toe up towards you. Notice that the kneecap moves up as you contract. Hold, then relax and repeat. Make sure to keep your back straight during the exercise.

For a greater challenge, try this exercise standing up. Raise one heel off the floor, then tighten the muscles in the front of that thigh and lower your heel to the floor. Notice that the kneecap moves up as you contract. Then relax and repeat.

- **Bridges:** To do bridges, begin lying on your back with your knees bent and feet hip width apart. Squeeze your stomach and buttock muscles and lift your bottom up into a bridge position. Return to the starting position and repeat. Make sure to keep your stomach and buttock muscles active and do not arch your back during the exercise.
- **Clamshells:** To do clamshells, begin lying on your side with your knees bent and your hips and shoulders stacked. Engage your abdominals and raise your top knee up toward the ceiling, then slowly return to the starting position and repeat. Make sure to keep your core engaged and do not roll your hips forward or backward during the exercise. When you are doing clamshells correctly, you will feel the effect of the exercise in the outside of the hip.

Start by doing at least 5 repetitions of each strengthening exercise every day. Add a few repetitions every few days until you can do 10 repetitions of each exercise. In addition to these strengthening exercises, stretching the muscles at the top of your thigh can help you regain range of motion.

- **Heel Slides:** To do heel slides, begin lying on your back with your legs straight. Slowly slide one heel on the floor toward your buttocks, until you feel a stretch in your knee or upper leg, then slide it back out and repeat. Make sure not to arch your low back or twist your body as you move your leg.
- **Standing Thigh Stretch:** To stretch your thigh, begin standing with one foot resting on a chair behind you, holding on to a stable surface. Bend your standing leg and gently press your hips forward until you feel a stretch in the front of your opposite thigh. Hold this position. Make sure to keep your back straight and your hips level during the exercise.

For each stretch, do three repetitions once per day, holding each for 30 seconds. If these strengthening exercises and stretches make you feel better, consider it a green light to continue with them, but remember not to overdo it. However, you may experience some discomfort with these strengthening exercises and stretches. If you notice an increase in pain, consider it a yellow light and proceed with caution. If you notice worsening pain with these strengthening exercises and stretches, consider it a red light for now. Stop the activity and move on to the next. Remember to try the exercise or stretch again later that day or the next day. It's important to keep your body moving within your 'pain free' zone. Take a moment now to pause this video and give these exercises and stretches a try. **3. Joint Protection Strategies** In addition to staying active, it's also important to protect your knee joint during daily activities. Choosing proper footwear, using an assistive device, or wearing a brace can help take pressure off your knee joint and make it easier to move around.

- **Footwear:** Supportive and comfortable shoes promote proper leg alignment. Choose good walking shoes with firm or rigid arch support. Avoid wearing non-supportive shoes or sandals.
- **Assistive devices:** Assistive devices such as a walking stick or cane can be helpful to take pressure off your knee as you walk, and can typically be found at your local pharmacy. When using a walking stick or cane, hold it in the hand opposite your painful knee and try to walk as normally as possible.
- **Bracing:** Braces can provide support to reduce pain. While most people do not require a knee brace, you may find that a simple compression sleeve makes you feel more comfortable.

If you do use a simple brace or assistive device, oftentimes you'll only need to use it for a short time until your knee is feeling better. **4. Ice and Heat** Using ice or heat can also help you find some relief from knee pain. For long-standing pain or discomfort, you can try either ice or heat and use whichever one works best for you. For a new onset of discomfort, ice is typically best. Use an ice pack wrapped in a towel to protect your skin, and for heat, use a heating pad on a low or medium setting. Use the ice pack or heating pad for 10-15 minutes every 2-3 hours. Now that you've learned about management of knee pain, create a plan of action. Start doing the exercises and stretches throughout your day, and choose at least three of the other strategies to work on at home for the next six weeks. Research shows that a combination of these strategies is the most effective way to reduce knee pain, even more than other interventions like corticosteroid injections. The most

important thing is to use these strategies consistently and frequently. Do what your body likes, and be patient as your body heals. If you take care of yourself, you can reduce or even eliminate your knee pain in just a few weeks. Staying healthy, exercising, using joint protection strategies, and applying ice and heat can go a long way in helping you find relief. View this video as many times as you like. If you still have any questions about knee pain, or if your symptoms do not start improving within three weeks, contact your health care provider.