

Knee pain

This leaflet offers more information about knee pain. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

What is knee pain and why have I got it?

Most knee pain is not serious and will often get better over time.

It can be caused by a sudden twist or fall which may over-stretch ligaments, muscles and tendons or irritate the joint cartilage.

Knee pain may also be caused by a repetitive activity such as running, usually due to muscle tightness or weakness around the joint.

Sometimes pain felt in the knee may actually be referred pain from your hip or back.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- Pain
- Swelling
- Stiffness
- Reduced movement
- Muscle weakness or tightness
- Clicking.

What treatments are available?

Directly after a sprain you can reduce bruising and swelling inside the joint by cooling it with very cold water or an **ice pack**.

Never apply ice or frozen plastic, such as a bag of frozen peas, directly to the skin - always wrap it in a damp towel first. Ice or cold water should be applied as soon as possible after an injury for a maximum of 10 minutes and can be reapplied every two hours for the first 72 hours.

Is there anything I can do to help myself?

Elevation

Whilst resting, elevate your knee and lower leg above hip height using a pillow. This helps reduce swelling.

Rest / movement

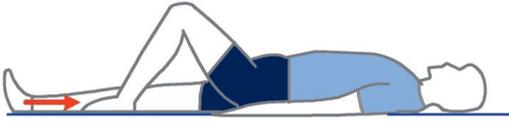
Try to rest your knee in the first 48 hours after injury and stop any activities such as running which may aggravate it. Wear flat and supportive shoes (preferably lace ups) while you are recovering.

Continue to walk as your pain allows and pace your activities each day to avoid flare ups. Slow your pace to walk as normally as possible to avoid limping.

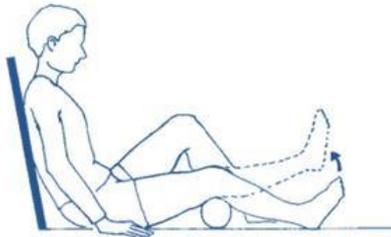
Rest is important, but too much may lead to muscle weakness and tightness and increase your recovery time. You should also try to gently move your knee and start to exercise as soon as you can - the sooner you do, the quicker your recovery will be.

Try the following exercises for your knee:

1. Lie on the floor or bed with your knee straight. Slowly bend the affected knee and let your heel slides towards your bottom as far as comfortable. Hold this position for 10 seconds then return to a straightened position. Repeat 10 times.



2. Sit with your back supported and legs out straight. Place a towel under the knees. Tighten the front thigh muscle (quadriceps) by pushing the knee into the towel so your heel lifts off the floor. Hold 10 seconds and repeat 10 times.



3. Sit on a chair with your arms folded. Slowly stand up without using your arms. When upright, return slowly to the sitting position again without using your arms. Repeat 10 times.



4. Sitting in your chair, point your toes towards you and tighten the thigh muscles to lift your lower leg up to the ceiling. Hold this position for 10 seconds and relax. Repeat 10 times.



Please note that while you may experience low level discomfort whilst completing these exercises they should not increase the pain you experience on a daily basis. Perform each exercise slowly and only move as far as it feels comfortable. Try and repeat exercises two to three times a day.

Swimming and cycling might also be appropriate as these can increase your mobility, strength and aerobic capacity without putting too much stress on your knee joint.

Once you have recovered, it is important to stay active to help keep your muscles, joints and bones healthy and prevent future problems.

What should I do if my pain continues?

Make sure you are not over exercising your knee and you are pacing your usual daily activities.

If your knee pain and / or swelling increases, stop doing the exercises and contact your GP or physiotherapist for further advice.

Useful sources of information

<http://www.csp.org.uk/your-health/conditions>

<https://www.arthritisresearchuk.org/Arthritis-information/Daily-Life/Pain-and-arthritis/Common-aches-and-pains.aspx>

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your back pain, please contact your physiotherapist on 020 8487 6022 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm). Alternatively contact us by email:

WACCG.physiotherapyoutpatients@nhs.net

We are also on Twitter: @QMHMSKphysio

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111



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