

Exercise for Knee Arthritis

Non-operative home program

Exercise is one of the most effective treatments for knee arthritis. It works as well as many medicines, without the side effects. Strong thigh and hip muscles take load off the joint and make everyday activities easier. Expect it to take 6 to 8 weeks to feel the difference.

- Do the strengthening exercises 3 days a week. Walk or bike on most other days.
- Start with 1 set. Build to 2 or 3 sets as it gets easier.
- Avoid high-impact exercise such as running and jumping. Avoid deep squats past 90 degrees if your kneecap area hurts.
- Every pound of weight you lose takes about 4 pounds of pressure off your knee with each step.

Pain guide: Mild discomfort up to 3 out of 10 is OK during exercise. It should settle back to your usual level by the next morning. If it doesn't, do less next time.

YOUR PROGRAM Strength, balance, and motion



Sit to Stand

Sit at the front of a sturdy chair, feet under your knees. Lean forward and stand up, then sit back down slowly.

Do: 10 reps x 2 sets

Use your hands at first if you need to. Work toward not needing them.



Step-Up

Face a step. Put your whole foot on the step and stand up tall on that leg. Step back down slowly.

Do: 10 reps x 2 sets, each side

Start with a 4-inch step. Go higher as you get stronger.



Bridge

Lie on your back, knees bent, feet flat. Squeeze your buttocks and lift your hips until you are straight from shoulders to knees. Hold 3 seconds, lower slowly.

Do: 10 reps x 2 sets



Side-Lying Hip Raise

Lie on your side, bottom knee bent. Keep your top leg straight and slightly behind you, toes forward. Lift about 12 inches, lower slowly.

Do: 12 reps x 2 sets, each side

Don't let your top hip roll backward.



Mini Squat

Hold a counter, feet hip-width apart. Push your hips back and bend your knees a little, like starting to sit. Stand back up.

Do: 15 reps x 2 sets

Go only as low as is comfortable. Keep your knees over your toes.



Seated Kick-Out

Sit tall. Straighten your knee all the way and tighten your thigh. Hold 3 seconds, then lower slowly.

Do: 10 reps x 2 sets, 2 times a day

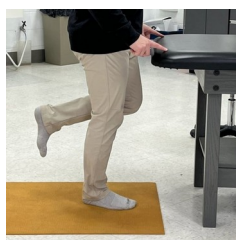


Straight Leg Raise

Bend your other knee. Tighten your thigh so your knee is locked straight, then lift your leg to the height of the other knee. Lower slowly.

Do: 10 reps x 2 sets, 2 times a day

If your knee bends as you lift, do thigh tighteners for a few more days first.



Single-Leg Balance

Stand next to a counter and lift one foot. Balance as long as you can, touching the counter only if you need to.

Do: 30 seconds, 3 times each side

Harder: close your eyes or stand on a pillow.



Hamstring Stretch with Strap

Lie on your back with a strap around one foot. Pull the leg up with the knee straight until you feel a stretch behind your thigh. Hold.

Do: Hold 30 seconds, 3 times each side



Calf Stretch at Wall

Hands on a wall, one foot back. Keep the back knee straight and heel down, and lean forward until you feel a stretch. Hold.

Do: Hold 30 seconds, 3 times each side



Stationary Bike

Set the seat so your knee is slightly bent at the bottom. Pedal with light resistance. If you can't go all the way around, rock back and forth.

Do: 15 to 30 minutes, most days

This program is a guide. Stop any exercise that causes sharp pain and let us know. Questions? Call (425) 656-5060.