

Kneecap Dislocation: Exercise Program

Non-operative treatment after a kneecap (patella) dislocation

After a kneecap dislocation, the tissues on the inner side of the kneecap need time to heal. The muscles that hold the kneecap in its groove need to get strong. Most first-time dislocations are treated with this kind of program.

- Wear your kneecap brace whenever you are on your feet for the first 4 weeks. Then wean off it over the next few weeks as your control improves.
- You can put full weight on your leg as comfort allows.
- Avoid twisting or pivoting on a bent knee, and avoid deep kneeling.
- No cutting or pivoting sports until we clear you.

Pain guide: Mild discomfort up to 3 out of 10 is OK. If your knee is more swollen the next morning, do less next time.

EARLY Weeks 0 to 3

Thigh Tightener (Quad Set)

Lie with your leg straight. Tighten the muscle on top of your thigh and press the back of your knee down. Hold 5 seconds, then relax.

Do: 10 reps, 3 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

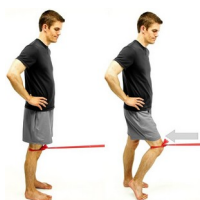
If your knee bends as you lift, do thigh tighteners for a few more days first.



Band Knee Straightening

Loop a band behind your knee and anchor it in front. Start with your knee slightly bent, then push it back until fully straight. Hold 3 seconds.

Do: 15 reps x 2 sets



Clamshell

Lie on your side, knees bent, heels together. Keep your feet touching and lift your top knee. Don't let your hips roll back.

Do: 15 reps x 2 sets, each side. Add a band when easy



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



LATER Weeks 3 to 8

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.



Side Step-Down

Stand sideways on a step on your working leg. Slowly bend that knee to lower the other heel to the floor, then stand back up.

Do: 10 reps x 2 sets

Keep your knee pointing over your second toe. Don't let it cave in.



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.



CALL US: Call us if your kneecap dislocates again, or if your knee becomes very swollen or locks.

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