

Meniscus Tear: Exercise Program

Non-operative treatment for a wear-and-tear meniscus tear

Many meniscus tears in adult knees are wear-and-tear tears. For most of these, a good exercise program works as well as surgery. Strong thigh and hip muscles protect the knee and calm the pain. Give it 6 to 12 weeks.

- Do the exercises once a day, 5 days a week.
- For now, avoid deep squatting, twisting on a bent knee, and kneeling if it hurts.
- Walking, biking, and swimming are good for your knee.
- Call us if your knee locks or catches and won't straighten.

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



Heel Prop (Straighten Your Knee)

Rest your heel on a rolled towel or pillow with nothing under your knee. Relax your thigh and let gravity straighten your knee.

Do: 5 to 10 minutes, 3 times a day

A straight knee comes first. Don't sleep with a pillow under your knee.



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

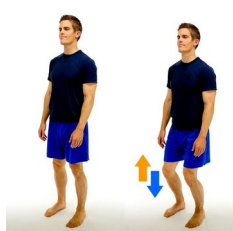


Sit to Stand

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.



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.



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

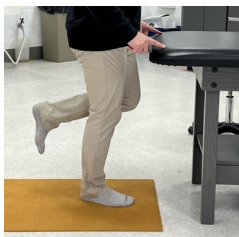
Don't let your top hip roll backward.



Calf Raise

Hold a counter. Rise up onto your toes as high as you can, then lower slowly.

Do: 15 reps x 2 sets. Progress to one leg



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.



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 20 minutes, most days

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