

Kneecap Pain (Patellofemoral Pain)

Home exercise program

Pain around or behind the kneecap usually means the joint is being overloaded, not that it is damaged. The best treatment is strengthening both your hip and your thigh muscles. Hip strength helps keep your knee lined up so the kneecap tracks well. Most people improve a lot within 6 to 12 weeks.

- Do the exercises once a day, 5 days a week.
- For now, avoid deep squats, lunges, and kneeling, and don't bend your knee past 90 degrees while it's loaded.
- Take stairs one at a time if they hurt. Walk or run on flat ground instead of hills.
- Move to Stage 2 when stairs and walking hurt less than 3 out of 10, usually after about 3 weeks.

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.

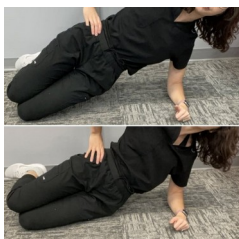
STAGE 1: HIP AND THIGH STRENGTH Weeks 0 to 3



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



Side Plank from Knees

Lie on your side on your elbow, knees bent. Lift your hips so you are straight from shoulders to knees. Hold.

Do: Hold 20 seconds, 3 times each side. Build to 45 seconds



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



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.



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



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.



STAGE 2: LOADING THE KNEE Week 3 and on



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 Band Walk

Put a loop band around your ankles or above your knees. Bend your knees slightly and step sideways, keeping the band tight.

Do: 10 steps each way, 3 times



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.



Standing Quad Stretch

Hold a counter. Pull your heel toward your buttock with your knees side by side. Hold.

Do: Hold 30 seconds, 3 times each side



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

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