Understanding And Helping Your Knee Pain

Knee pain is a very common condition and various structures can cause it. It can occur following an injury or can simply present as pain in daily activities without any particular explanation or cause.

**Following an injury** such as a ligament injury, tendon injury, a fall or a twisting injury to the knee, the first thing to do is

**“PRICE”**

- Protect it,
- Rest from strenuous activities
- Ice the injured area for up to 10 minutes
- Compress it with a bandage
- Elevate to limit swelling

Then seek the help of a physiotherapist to understand the diagnosis and the management plan.

**In the case of pain in daily activities** that started progressively without any particular reason or event, such as knee pain when running, pain kneeling, going down stairs or exercising, the problem can be in the knee itself, or in the surrounding joints structures above and below the knee.

**Anterior Knee Pain**
The most common knee pain that we see in the clinic is called **Patellofemoral Pain Syndrome (PFP)**, which is what we explain to patients as being “misalignment/maltracking of the kneecap. It is also known as **Anterior Knee Pain or Runners knee**. It presents as pain in the front of the knee in daily activities such as going up/down stairs, kneeling and running.

**What causes it? Why is your knee painful?**
If you experience pain in the front of your knee first you can ask yourself:
- Did you increase your sporting activity recently?
- Or reduce it?
- Did you have to do repetitive lifting, kneeling or stairs?

➢ These questions can help you understand why it flared up.

The **main factors** that can have an impact on your knee:
- Muscle weakness around the knee or hip: gluteus muscles, vastus medialis of the quadriceps
- Lack of flexibility: mainly in the hip and calf muscles
So what can you do about your knee pain?

As listed above, you can see that the main factors that influence your knee pain are modifiable. The best way to improve symptoms is to follow a multimodal approach with tailored rehabilitation that includes strengthening and stretching exercises, the use of orthoses to support your foot arch if necessary and other treatments such as knee taping.

Will wearing a knee support help?

- A knee support or brace can help in the early stages after an injury when the pain is severe and you need to walk or stand for periods of time.
- However, it does not train muscles or address the causative factors and does not help you other than giving some support.
- It cannot be used instead of treatment and if used for too long can encourage the muscles around the knee to weaken further as they have less work to do.
- Careful assessment and treatment of your knee is the key to changing and improving your symptoms.

Anat Meier is a Physiotherapist with an MSc in Sports & Exercise Medicine and a special interest in lower limb and running-related injuries. To tailor your rehabilitation and seek advice do not hesitate to contact us.

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