



## **Kneecap Pain**

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If you experience pain underneath and around your kneecap (patella) you may be experiencing symptoms of patellofemoral pain syndrome. Individuals with patellofemoral pain syndrome often experience pain in the front of their knee that is made worse with activity, sitting for long periods of time, or walking up and down stairs.

The patella is attached to the large group of muscles on the front of the thigh called the quadriceps. It is attached to the lower leg bone (tibia) by the patellar tendon. The patella fits into a groove formed by the lower end of the upper leg bone (femur). This area is called the femoral condyle. When the knee is repeatedly flexed and extended irritation can begin to develop on the backside of the patella.

There are multiple causes and/or anatomical conditions that can cause a person to be more susceptible to developing patellofemoral pain syndrome. These causes include: being knock-kneed, having wide hips, underdeveloped thigh muscles, or arches of your feet that collapse when walking or running. All these conditions can cause the tracking of the patella within the femoral condyle to become irregular and lead to the irritation/pain on the backside of the patella.

Treatment of patellofemoral pain syndrome includes:

- Using ice on your knee for 20 to 30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours
- Taking anti-inflammatory pain medicine, such as ibuprofen, as prescribed by your health care provider.
- Wearing orthotics in your shoes to correct dropped arches if recommended by your health care provider.
- Performing specific exercises recommended by your health care provider that aim to strengthen your quadriceps and improve patellar tracking mechanics.
- Using an infrapatellar strap which is placed over the patellar tendon, or wearing a neoprene knee sleeve that will support the patella and its tracking pattern.

If you are experiencing the symptoms of patellofemoral pain syndrome, remember that a physical therapist can evaluate your knee to determine the underlying cause of your pain and design a specific plan of care that can alleviate that pain.