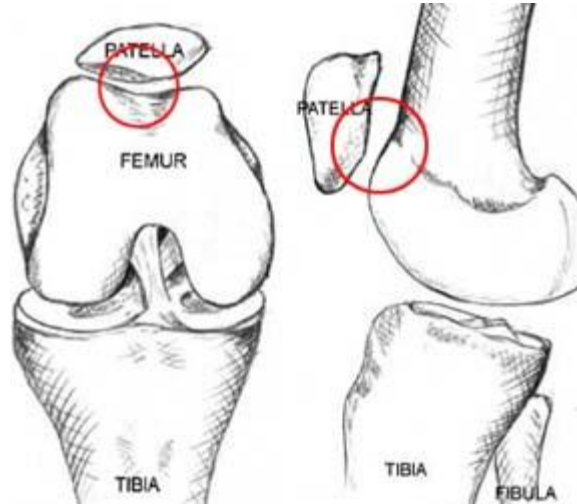


Runner's Knee

Runner's knee, otherwise known as patellofemoral syndrome, is an injury to the cartilage on the underside of the kneecap where it glides on the groove at the end of the thighbone. It is often caused by repetitive stress to the knee, coupled with abnormal changes in how the kneecap normally functions.

What are the symptoms?

Runner's knee typically feels like a dull, aching pain either in the front or outside of the knee, around the kneecap. Often swelling will occur along with pain. Sometimes you will note a "crunchy" or "clicking" feeling under the kneecap.



Runner's knee can be aggravated by squatting or descending stairs or slopes. Excessive running can also aggravate runner's knee, especially with changes in running frequency or duration. Changes in how the kneecap normally functions also contribute to runner's knee. These changes occur in those with flat feet, imbalances in muscle strength, or inadequate stretching.

Treatment

You can treat runner's knee in a number of ways.

The first step is calming down inflammation. Stop any aggravating activities to allow sore areas to rest. Over the counter anti-inflammatories, taken as directed, as well as ice can help relieve pain and swelling. Icing can be done in a number of different ways:

- Apply a commercial cold pack or a bag of frozen vegetables to the affected area for 20 minutes. Allow 40 minutes before re-icing.
- Freeze water inside a small paper cup and massage the sore areas for 5 minutes.

After settling down the inflammation, specific exercises are important to help relieve pain and allow you to return to pain-free activities.

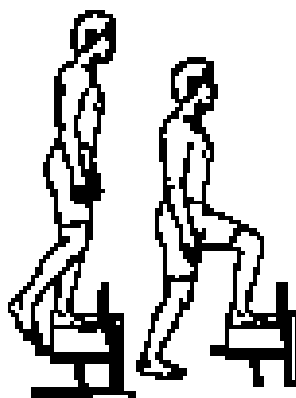
Supine Hamstring Stretch with Strap: Place a strap around the foot, use your arms to raise your leg up in the air with a straight knee until a strong but comfortable stretch is felt behind the thigh. Hold for 30 seconds. Perform 3 times, 2 times per day.



Lateral Hamstring Stretch with Strap: Using a strap or long towel, bring your injured leg up & across your body until a strong but comfortable stretch is felt on the outside of your thigh. Hold 30 seconds. Perform 3 times, 2 times per day.



Backwards Step Down: Standing on bottom stair step or 6 inch stool, slowly bend affected leg until opposite foot touches the ground. Return to the starting position. Try to keep your hips level throughout the exercise. Perform 3 sets of 10 repetitions, 1 time per day.



Swimming is a good alternative to running, allowing you stay active without aggravating symptoms. When returning to running, proper footwear is also important.

If your symptoms persist or become more severe, you may need to follow up with an orthopaedic specialist. Call 630-225-BONE to schedule an appointment with a physician from OAD Orthopaedics.

Disclaimer: * This information should NOT be used in place of visit with your healthcare provider, nor should you disregard the advice of your health care provider because of any information you read in this topic.