Baylor Scott & White
ORTHOPEDIC ASSOCIATES OF DALLAS
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Manoj P. Reddy, MD
Sports Medicine & Shoulder Surgery
Orthopedic Associates of Dallas
469.800.7200 office | 469.800.7210 fax
DallasOrtho.com | ReddyOrtho.com

Patellofemoral Pain (Runner's Knee)

HOME EXERCISE PROGRAM

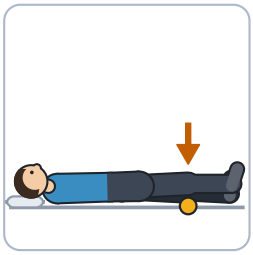
Patellofemoral pain is pain around or behind the kneecap. It usually comes on with stairs, squatting, running, or sitting a long time with the knees bent. It is an overload problem, not damage to the joint. Strengthening the hip and thigh muscles is the most effective treatment, and most people improve within 6-12 weeks.

How to do this program

- Pain rule: mild discomfort up to 3 out of 10 during exercise is okay if it settles by the next morning. Stop any exercise that causes sharp pain.
- Move slowly and with control. Breathe normally; do not hold your breath.
- Do Phase 1 daily for 1-2 weeks, then add Phase 2. The hip exercises are as important as the knee exercises.
- Keep knee-bending exercises in a range that stays at 3 out of 10 pain or less. Go deeper only as pain allows.

Phase 1 · Settle pain and switch on muscles (weeks 0-2)

Low-load thigh and hip exercises that keep stress off the kneecap.

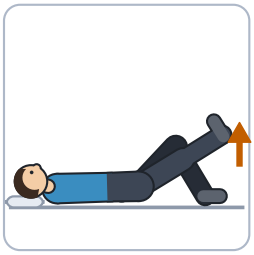


1. Quad Set

Lie with the leg straight and a small towel under the knee. Tighten the thigh to press the back of the knee down. Hold 5 seconds.

Make it harder: *Do it sitting with the heel propped on a stool.*

15 reps · 2-3 times a day



2. Straight-Leg Raise

Bend the other knee. Tighten the thigh of the straight leg first, then lift it to the height of the other knee. Lower slowly.

Make it harder: *Add a 1-3 lb ankle weight.*

3 sets of 10 · once a day



3. Clamshell

Lie on your side with knees bent. Keeping your feet together, lift the top knee, then lower slowly. Do both sides.

Make it harder: *Add a band around the thighs.*

3 sets of 12 · once a day



4. Side-Lying Leg Lift

Lie on your side with the bottom knee bent. Keep the top leg straight and lift it toward the ceiling, slightly behind you. Lower slowly.

Make it harder: *Add a 1-3 lb ankle weight.*

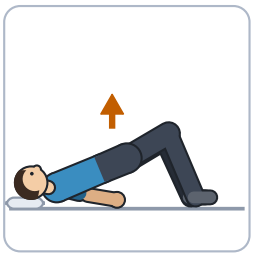
3 sets of 12 · once a day

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Phase 2 · Strength and control (weeks 2-12)

Keep doing the hip exercises and add these. Keep the knee over the middle of the foot.

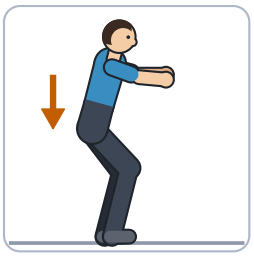


5. Bridge

Lie with knees bent and feet flat. Squeeze your buttocks and lift your hips until your body is in a straight line. Hold 3 seconds.

Make it harder: *Lift one foot off the floor (single-leg bridge).*

3 sets of 10 · once a day

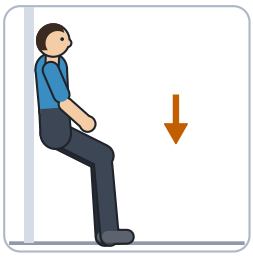


6. Quarter Squat

Hold a counter if needed. Push your hips back and bend the knees only partway (about a quarter squat), keeping the knees over your toes. Stand back up.

Make it harder: *Squat a little deeper as long as it stays pain-free.*

3 sets of 10 · once a day



7. Wall Sit

Back against a wall, feet 1-2 feet out. Slide down until the knees are bent partway (no more than 45-60°) and hold.

Make it harder: *Hold longer, or slide a little lower if it stays pain-free.*

Hold 20-30 sec · 5 reps · once a day

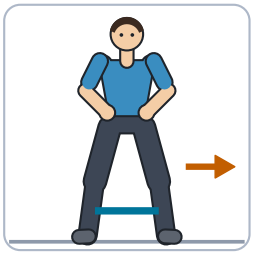


8. Step-Down

Stand on a 4-inch step on the sore leg. Slowly bend that knee to tap the other heel to the floor, keeping the knee over your foot. Straighten up.

Make it harder: *Use a 6-8 inch step.*

3 sets of 10 · once a day



9. Side Band Walk

Loop band just above the knees. Bend the knees slightly and take 10 small steps to the side, then 10 back, toes forward.

Make it harder: *Use a stronger band, or move it down to the ankles.*

3 rounds each way · once a day



10. Standing Quad Stretch

Hold a wall. Bend the knee and hold the ankle, gently pulling the heel toward your buttock. Keep the knees together.

Make it harder: *Loop a towel around the ankle if you cannot reach it.*

Hold 30 sec · 3 reps · 2 times a day

Everyday tips

- Cut back, don't stop: halve stairs, hills and running until pain settles, then build up about 10% a week.
- When sitting a long time, straighten the knee or get up every 30-45 minutes.
- Runners: take shorter, quicker steps. Taping or a knee sleeve can help short term.

Call the office if

- The knee swells, locks or gives way.
- You feel the kneecap slip out of place.
- Pain is not improving after 6-8 weeks of the program.