



# How to manage my **patellofemoral pain**

**HORDERHEALTHCARE**

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## What is patellofemoral pain?

Patellofemoral pain is a very common condition affecting both males and females knee cap.

## What are the common aggravating activities?

It often results in pain during daily activities such as walking, running, sitting, squatting, kneeling, walking up and down stairs and getting out of a chair.

## What can ease my patellofemoral pain?

- Continuation of the exercises provided by your therapist
- Taping techniques to support the knee cap
- If your therapist recommended a brace than this can be worn
- Foot orthotics may help if they have been recommended

## What might cause my knee pain?

There are many causes for patellofemoral pain. Excessive loading or varied and rapid changes to physical activity which your knee isn't used to are thought to contribute to causing your symptoms.



Other things such as poor biomechanics (how you move) can also contribute. The knee cap tracks in a natural groove as we bend and straighten our leg; when we have poor biomechanics the knee cap is thought to move to the outside of the knee, stopping it from tracking normally in its groove. There are many factors that can lead to this poor tracking.

1. Pelvis drops on opposite side, placing increased pressure on outside of leg, pulling the knee cap outwards.
2. Due to weakness around the hip muscles the hip falls inwards and rolls under the knee cap.
3. Thigh muscles may be weak meaning there is inadequate support for the knee and knee cap.
4. Foot rolls in excessively causing the lower leg and knee to drop in under the knee cap.

## How do I manage my patellofemoral pain?

Research demonstrates that the most effective treatment for patellofemoral pain in the short, medium and long term is exercise therapy. This involves completing regular hip and thigh strengthening exercises to help with the function of these joints.

Following your treatment, you will have a series of recommended exercises each with progressions, it is important that you can perform them correctly to ensure the right muscle is being exercised and that you do not progress too quickly. Other things such as taping, bracing and foot orthotics can also be used.



It is important that you gradually increase your physical activity levels and have rest days in between in order to prevent your symptoms reoccurring. You can exert yourself when exercising but pace yourself to avoid overdoing it!






There is no current research to suggest that surgical intervention significantly improves patellofemoral pain.

### Recommended exercises:

*RPE = Rate of perceived exertion (out of 10)*

EXERCISE	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:
	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:
<b>STRAIGHT LEG RAISE</b>	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:
	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:
	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:
<b>KNEE EXT WITH BAND</b>	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:

	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:
	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:
LATERAL HIP SIDELYE	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:
	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:
	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:
BRIDGE	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:
	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:	Reps/ sets:
	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:	RPE:
SIT TO STAND	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:	Pain:

## How long will it take for my patellofemoral pain to improve?

It will take roughly 6 weeks of exercise therapy before changes start to be occur and 3 months until you start to notice the benefits of strengthening.

But remember you can use taping, bracing or orthotics to help your symptoms in the short term.

## What do I do if my symptoms flare up?

It is normal for flare ups to happen and they can be managed well by you without needing any help from your therapist.

**Step 1:** Ease off the activities that are aggravating your symptoms.

**Step 2:** Use things like taping or bracing to help ease your pain. You may also want to consider taking pain relief at this point as well.

**Step 3:** Return to the lighter exercises that you were given at the start of the programme.

**Step 4:** Once your symptoms start to settle, you can formulate an action plan to return to your previous level of exercise. Start again by gradually increasing your activity levels keeping your knee comfortable (<5/10 on pain scale).

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