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## Anterior knee pain syndrome (patellofemoral pain)

### A patient's guide

**Whittington Health**  
Magdala Avenue  
London  
N19 5NF  
Phone: 020 7272 3070

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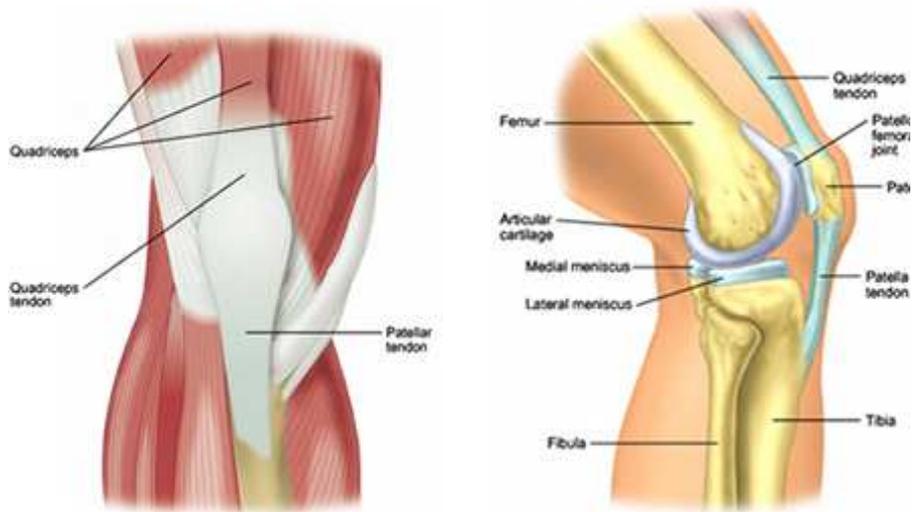
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## What is patellofemoral pain syndrome (PFPS)?

Patellofemoral pain is used to describe pain that occurs around the front of the kneecap.

Notes



This is a common condition which usually affects young adults but can be felt at any age. Up to one third of the population is likely to experience this condition at one time or another.

The pain usually occurs when the normal movement of the patella (knee cap) on the femur (thigh bone) becomes irritable.

## Further information

NHS choices – anterior knee pain

[www.nhs.uk/Conditions/knee-pain/Pages/Introduction.aspx#anterior](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/knee-pain/Pages/Introduction.aspx#anterior)

Arthritis Research UK – Patellofemoral pain syndrome

[www.arthritisresearchuk.org/arthritis-information/conditions/patellofemoral-pain-syndrome.aspx](http://www.arthritisresearchuk.org/arthritis-information/conditions/patellofemoral-pain-syndrome.aspx)

## Symptoms

The main symptom is pain behind the kneecap. This may come and go and may worsen when going up and down stairs, taking part in certain sports or sitting with the knee bent for long periods. You may also feel a catching, aching or feeling of the knee giving way.

There are a number of different factors that can cause patellofemoral, such as overuse of the knee or increased activity.

Caring for your knee at home is the key to helping reduce symptoms. There is no need for any operation, most people will be able to manage the condition themselves through exercise, increasing fitness and changing certain daily activities.

## Ways to manage your pain

It is often helpful to reduce the amount of time you spend with your knees bent eg. sitting, squatting, kneeling as this can aggravate symptoms

### Ice

Use an ice pack to help reduce any swelling (for example a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a wet towel placed on the knee).

### Footwear

Try wearing shoes with an arch support.

## Exercise

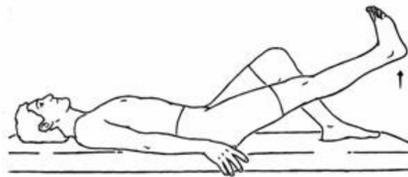
Exercise is key to increasing your fitness levels and maintaining a healthy weight. This puts less strain on joints and keeps muscles strong. There is good evidence for strengthening exercises for this type of pain.

Examples of good exercises include:

- swimming
- brisk walking
- group exercises - check availability at your local gym, leisure centre
- cycling
- home exercise plans (see below).

## Straight leg raise

Lying on your back bend the supporting leg and keep the affected leg straight, lift the straight leg up and down repeat until muscles feel tired, relax and repeat three times.



## Hip abduction

Keeping your back straight with the affected leg on top, bend the underneath supporting leg.



## Stretches

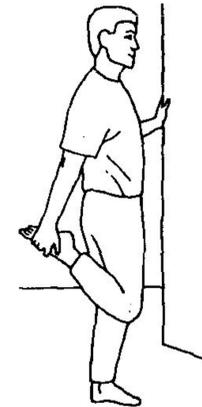
Hamstring stretch: lying down bend one leg and lean gentle forward (aim to try and touch your toes) until you feel the stretch, hold for 20 seconds ,relax and repeat.



## Quad stretch

Keeping your back straight, hold onto a wall for support. Bend your knee and bring the foot towards your bottom.

Keep the supporting leg a little bent. When you feel the stretch hold for 20 seconds, relax and then repeat.



None of these exercises should be painful, please discontinue if the bring on any of your knee pain

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