

Exercises for Patella (Kneecap) Pain, Patellar Tendinitis, and Common Operations for Kneecap Problems

Frank R. Noyes, Sue Barber-Westin

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Patellar (kneecap) pain is one of the most common reasons patients seek medical treatment at orthopaedic and sports medicine clinics. There may or may not be an injury that causes this problem. Even without a distinct injury, patellar pain may occur suddenly with warning. Or, discomfort may come on gradually over time and slowly become worse and worse. There are many different causes of patellar pain and may terms have been used that describe this problem. These include patellofemoral pain syndrome, anterior knee pain, runner's knee, jumper's knee, and patellofemoral chondromalacia. Patellar pain can be very frustrating and reduce the quality of life if it becomes a chronic, long-standing problem. Home remedies such as rest, ice, elevation, and over-the-counter pain medicines may not resolve patellar pain, or keep it from returning time and time again. The good news is that approximately 80% of patients with patellar pain can be greatly helped with the right orthopaedic medical treatment and physical therapy program supervised by a physicianphysical therapist team.

Patellar tendinitis represents an acute injury or onset of pain to the patellar tendon (the tendon that connects the patella to the shinbone). This condition is usually due to overuse, or repeated stress that causes tiny, microtears in the tendon, resulting in inflammation and pain. This condition is often seen in athletes involved in sports that require frequent jumping, such as volleyball and basketball - hence the frequently used term, jumper's knee. Strenuous occupations that require work on ladders or a lot of climbing can also cause patellar tendinitis. When treated with appropriate conservative measures that reduce the inflammation and improve muscle strength and flexibility, this problem may be successfully managed. However, if not successfully managed, after a long period of time, the condition becomes chronic and is referred to as patellar tendinosis. This problem may occur in older individuals as a result of degeneration of the tendon from years of repetitive micro-trauma. Unlike patellar tendinitis, there is no inflammation in the tendon. Physical therapy is quite helpful when tendinitis begins to effect sports or becomes noticeable during regular daily activities, and even in chronic cases of tendinosis where the tendon itself must be strengthened.

Although there is a considerable amount of information available on the Internet about kneecap pain and patellar tendinitis, not all comes from medical professionals with the clinical and research knowledge that "knee specialists" have. After treating patients for nearly 4 decades with knee problems, two medical professionals - Dr. Frank Noyes and Sue Barber-Westin - decided to write this eBook to try to help individuals understand this problem, the treatment options currently available, and what to expect as a result of these options. Noves, an internationally renowned orthopaedic surgeon and researcher, and Barber-Westin, Director of Clinical Research at the Cincinnati SportsMedicine Research and Education Foundation, team up to provide information that is easy to read and understand regarding kneecap pain and patellar tendinitis. Together, Noyes and Barber-Westin have conducted more than 60 clinical research projects and published 145 articles in the medical literature. They have edited 2 orthopaedic textbooks, which have been purchased by thousands of medical professionals involved with caring for patients with knee problems. They have also written 11 eBooks on other types of knee problems.

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