

Understanding Knee Pain

Knee pain can be a debilitating problem, especially when an individual has not been involved in a traumatic event or accident. One condition that is seen frequently is called patellofemoral syndrome. There are several reasons and contributing factors that, per the research, support why there is an increase of prevalence of PFS in the clinic. PFS typically affects young men and women between the ages of 12 and 49 years old. The pain is often described as diffuse, achy throughout the front of the knee, globally in nature. People will also complain of pain with loading activities (running, jumping, descending stairs and prolonged activities). Rest, unloading or decreasing the load to the quadriceps typically provides relief. PFS is pain that develops over time where the individual will usually not have had any trauma associated with the pain. Because there is typically no trauma involved, the pathology is uncertain.

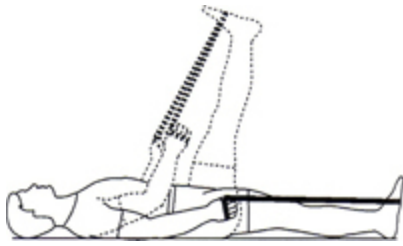
The causes of patellofemoral syndrome are not clear. However, there have been several contributing factors that have been discussed in the medical field and in research. Some postulate that the development of patellofemoral pain is caused by abnormal tracking of the patella within the femoral trochlear groove. This leads to increased stress on the patellofemoral joint. Muscle imbalances, particularly between the quadriceps, hamstrings and iliotibial band have been examined. A lack of flexibility, particularly the hip flexors, ITB and quadriceps and an increased q-angle, have also been cited. Decreased strength of the hamstrings vs. quadriceps and deviations in patellar position are also factors.

Typically individuals are instructed by physicians to take NSAID's for inflammation, modify activity level and pursue physical therapy. Physiotherapy treatment consists of manual therapy that addresses muscle imbalances, stretching, taping to improve patellar-tracking and reducing pain. Restoring proper patella mobility prior to promoting stability is vital with those afflicted with PFS. It is imperative that the patella track properly in the trochlear groove and perform its specific function, which is to transmit force above to below the knee joint. Massage and stretching tight muscles is very effective. Functional strengthening should target the weaker gluteus medius, gluteus maximus and hamstrings. The following are some stretches and strengthening exercises that may be beneficial.

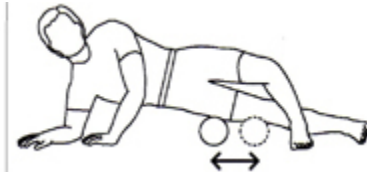
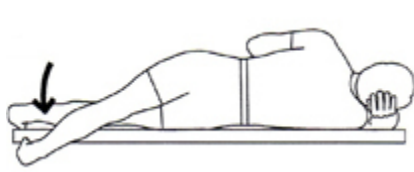
Stretching Exercises



Hip flexor stretch (keeping knee behind toe and not letting the trailing knee touch the ground)



Hamstring stretch



IT Band Stretches

Strengthening Exercises



Hamstring curls with a physioball



Trunk rotation w/diagonal lunge



In place partial lunge with diagonal cable rotation

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