

Knee Pain – The Dos and Don'ts

Tips to Help Keep Your Health On Track!

While most of your daily body movements won't usually cause any major issues or symptoms, problems can develop from the overuse of a particular joint, everyday wear and tear, or from a sudden injury. The knee is one joint that can be prone to injury from participation in sports, recreational activities, or simple work tasks, such as home-related projects and yard work. For some individuals, one knee injury can result in a long-term knee issue or, as you age, osteoporosis or arthritis may develop. ⁽¹⁾

The knee structure

The knee is the biggest joint in your body. Two discs called the menisci separate the upper and lower bones. The upper leg bone (the femur) and the lower leg bones (the tibia and fibula) are connected by muscles, tendons, and ligaments. The outer covering of the bones inside the knee joint are encased by articular cartilage which not only provides a smooth, slippery surface for joint movement but also absorbs shock. ⁽¹⁾

Knee pain dos and don'ts

Whether you've experienced a recent injury or you suffer from any pain or arthritis in your knee joints, there are things you can do to try and keep your knees healthier. ⁽¹⁾

- **Don't risk falling** – A sore or unstable knee can make a fall happen more easily and result in further knee damage. Minimize your risk of falls by keeping your home well lit, using handrails, and a sturdy ladder or foot stool if you are reaching for something high.
- **Do move and exercise** – Lack of movement can weaken muscles and worsen joint pain. While you want the movement to be safe for your knees, doing something is better than doing nothing. Speak with your doctor or a physical therapist to determine what is right for you, if you are unsure.
- **Don't ignore your weight** – Any added weight will stress your knees. Don't focus on reaching some perceived "ideal" weight goal. Losing even the smallest amount will make a difference.
- **Do use a walking aid** – If there is any reason you should be using a crutch, cane, or a walker to make yourself more stable and steady on your feet, use it. The potential effects from a fall far outweigh the reasons you may not want to use a walking aid.
- **Don't wear shoes that add to the problem** – Many types of shoes may look more stylish than others; however, you need to be in an appropriate shoe if you are unstable on your feet. A lower heel, rubber soles, and those with a cushioned insole may help reduce the risk of falling and/or lessen the stress on your knees.
- **Do consider acupuncture** – Acupuncture is a method where fine needles are inserted in various points on the body to help relieve many types of pain, including knee pain.
- **Do use the "RICE" method** – "Rice" (rest, ice, compression, and elevation) is an effective treatment for minor knee injuries or arthritis flare-ups. Rest your knee, apply ice to reduce swelling, wear a compressive bandage, and keep your knee elevated.
- **Do act quickly after a knee injury** – Use a cold pack or a bag of frozen vegetables on your knee for the first 48 to 72 hours to ease swelling and numb pain. Place it on your knee up to three to four times per day for 15 to 20 minutes, wrapping the ice pack in a towel to protect your skin. After each application of an ice pack, you can then use a warm bath, a warm towel, or a heating pad for 15 to 20 minutes, three to four times a day to help alleviate knee pain.
- **Don't jar your joints** – High-impact movements may further damage painful knees. Try to avoid any jarring movements, such as deep knee bends, lunges, running, or jumping, as they may create unnecessary stress on your knees.
- **Do reach out to your doctor** – If you experience any knee pain and you feel it's more than a bruise, have it checked out by a doctor in order to prevent a more serious long-term knee issue from developing.

⁽¹⁾ www.webmd.com

This is informational only, not a replacement for the medical advice of your physician.
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