

Knee Soft Tissue Injury

Service User Information Leaflet

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Produced by Fife Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Service

Diagrams: ©PhysioTools

What is a soft tissue injury?

The knee is a complex joint and is made up of many soft tissues. These include:

- Ligaments – which are strong bands of tissue that connect one bone to another
- Meniscus – this is the cartilage tissue which acts as a shock absorber in the knee joint.
- Muscles – which surround the knee joint.

How are these structures injured?

Any one or a combination of these structures can be injured. If the knee is subjected to abnormal forces such as twisting actions or bending sideways, these structures may be damaged causing a sprain or tear.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms can vary depending on the structure that is injured. Knee injuries may cause:

- Pain, swelling and/or bruising.
- Locking (an inability to straighten the knee).
- Giving way

How is it diagnosed?

You may need to be assessed by a health care professional who will fully assess your joint. In most cases scanning is not necessary however sometimes it is used to decide if any structures have been seriously injured.

How can I help myself?

In most cases symptoms will settle within 6 weeks. To help manage your pain it is advised that you regularly take simple pain relief. This can be bought over the counter from a pharmacist. If you have allergies or conditions which prevent the use of pain relieving or anti-inflammatory medication, please seek advice from your General Practitioner (GP) or a pharmacist. Keep generally active and try to get back to daily activity over time as pain allows.




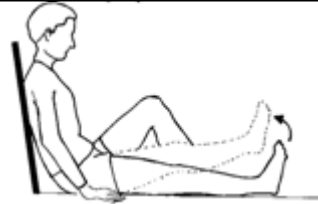
When can I return to normal activities?

If you participate in an active hobby then it is advisable that you do not return to this straight away. Wait until you have full strength, full range of movement and you can walk briskly, run and turn without experiencing pain and swelling.

If you play a sport, practice specific activities like dribbling or jumping to prepare the knee. Build this up gradually before returning to full training sessions and competition.

Home exercises

These exercises can be done on a daily basis, however if your pain increase significantly contact a health care professional. Sit or lie in a comfortable position on your bed or floor while doing these exercises.

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| <p>Exercise 1.</p>  | <p>Bend and straighten your knee a little and often through the day as pain allows.</p> |
| <p>Exercise 2.</p>  | <p>Lying on your back, tighten your buttock muscles.</p> <p>Hold for 10 seconds.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times. Repeat every hour.</p> |
| <p>Exercise 3.</p>  | <p>Without lifting your leg off the bed, tighten your thigh muscles (quadriceps) as if trying to push the back of your knee into the bed.</p> <p>Avoid lifting your leg straight off the bed at this stage.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times every hour.</p> |
| <p>Exercise 4.</p>  | <p>Tighten your thigh muscles as in Exercise 3.</p> <p>Keeping your leg straight, lift the leg approximately 10cms off the bed.</p> <p>Hold for 6 seconds. Return the leg to the bed slowly.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times.</p> <p>Repeat exercise every hour.</p> |