How Any Runner Struggling with Knee Pain Can Hit a New PR...And Not Just by Powering Through the Pain

Your Actionable Guide with Key Tips and Exercises to Keep You On the Road

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Using This Guide

If you're reading this, chances are you or someone you care about is experiencing knee pain or recovering from a knee injury. I understand how challenging and frustrating it can be to navigate the complexities of knee injuries, from understanding the diagnosis to finding the most effective treatment options.

This guide is designed to provide you with valuable insights, evidence-based information, and practical strategies for managing knee pain and optimizing recovery without the need for surgery. This guide offers a roadmap for your journey towards improved knee health and function.

Keep in mind that though you're experiencing pain now, it doesn't have to be that way forever. With this guide, you have the power to overcome obstacles, regain mobility, and return to the activities you enjoy.

I encourage you to approach this guide with an open mind, a positive attitude, and a commitment to your own well-being.
By taking proactive steps towards rehabilitation, implementing preventive measures, and prioritizing self-care, you can take control of your knee health and embrace a future filled with the ability to amplify your movement, sport, and life.

Welcome to your path to recovery. Let's embark on this journey together.

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What are some common knee injuries?

ACL Tears

Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) tears are among the most common knee injuries, particularly in athletes participating in sports that involve sudden stops, pivoting, or changes in direction. ACL tears can occur because of direct trauma, but nearly three quarters of ACL tears are from non-contact mechanisms, such as landing from a jump with improper knee alignment.

Meniscus Tears

The meniscus is a C-shaped cartilage structure that acts as a cushion and stabilizer within the knee joint that helps to absorb forces through your knee. Meniscus tears often occur due to twisting or rotational forces, leading to pain, swelling, and mechanical symptoms such as feelings of catching or locking of the knee.

Patellar Tendinitis

Also known as jumper's knee, patellar tendinitis is an overuse injury characterized by inflammation and degeneration of the patellar tendon, which connects the patella (kneecap) to the tibia (shinbone). Repetitive jumping, running, or squatting can contribute to the development of patellar tendinitis, causing pain and functional limitations.

Patellofemoral Pain Syndrome

Patellofemoral Pain Syndrome (PFPS) is a common knee condition characterized by pain around or behind the patella, especially during activities that involve bending the knee, such as climbing stairs, squatting, or sitting for prolonged periods. PFPS is often associated with factors such as muscle imbalance, biomechanical dysfunction, and overuse.

Osteoarthritis

Knee Osteoarthritis (KOA) is a chronic disease and the most common orthopedic disorder. But, despite “wear and tear” your body actually responds with “wear and repair.” It is multifactorial and is characterized by pathological changes in the knee joint structure including cartilage erosion, synovial inflammation, and subchondral sclerosis with osteophyte, or bone spur, formation.

No, surgery is not always required

Knee injuries are common among athletes and individuals of all ages and activity levels. Whether it's a torn ligament, damaged cartilage, tendinitis or overuse syndrome, knee injuries can significantly impact mobility and quality of life.

While surgical intervention *may* be necessary in *some* cases, conservative rehabilitation can often yield positive outcomes, allowing individuals to regain function, reduce pain, and return to their desired level of activity.

Conservative treatment options for knee injuries often involve a multi-modal approach, incorporating therapeutic exercise, manual therapy techniques, and adjunct modalities such as dry needling, taping, or instrument-assisted soft tissue massage. At Amplify Physical Therapy & Performance, you will get a customized rehabilitation program tailored to your specific needs and goals, addressing impairments in strength, flexibility, balance, and coordination.

From ACL tears to patellofemoral pain syndrome, the key takeaway is that rehabbing your knee appropriately can keep you off the surgery table. By addressing underlying impairments, optimizing biomechanics, and promoting tissue healing, physical therapy allows you to take a guided, active role in your recovery and achieve long-term success.

The following pages offer you key concepts and six of the most important exercises for promoting knee health.

Mobility Exercises

Click on each image to access a follow along video.

Exercise 1:

Self Toe Splaying with Ankle Rolls

DO: Create space between toes by placing your fingers between them and allow ankle to motion in clockwise and counterclockwise circles. Perform 2 sets of 10 reps per side.

DON'T: Force extra space between toes.

Exercise 2:

90/90 Hip Mobility

DO: Start with hands placed behind body for support and allow knees to switch from side to side. Gently lower knees to ground as tolerable. Perform 2 sets of 12 reps per side.

DON'T: Force extra range of motion that does not feel comfortable.

Strength Exercises

Click on each image to access a follow along video.

Exercise 3:

Isometric Split Stance Heel Raise

DO: Start with a controlled depth for balance. Hold static posture and allow front heel to raise off the ground. Perform 2 sets of 10 reps per side.

DON'T: Lose balance, hold onto a chair for support, if needed.

Exercise 4:

Standing Clamshell

DO: Start with foot on wall and knee slightly bent. Sit into the position and push your bent leg outward. Perform 3 sets of 8 reps per side.

DON'T: Lose balance, hold onto a chair for support, if needed.

Strength Exercises

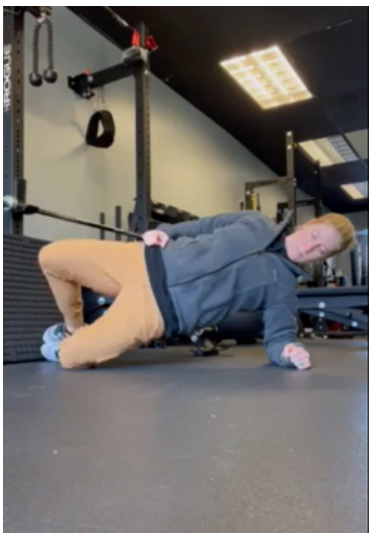
Click on each image to access a follow along video.

Exercise 5:

Lateral Step Down

DO: Start with a stair or 3-6" curb and control lowering through leg on step while maintaining knee aligned with third toe. Keep shoulders stacked over hips. Perform 3 sets of 8 reps per side.

DON'T: Push off foot landing to ground for momentum.



Exercise 6:

Side Plank Clamshell

DO: Start with elbow aligned under shoulder and press hips towards ceiling. Maintain hips off the ground and perform clamshell movement. Perform 3 sets of 5 reps per side.

DON'T: Allow top shoulder to roll over.

Key Concepts

Warm Up & Cool Down

Proper warm up and cool down routines are vital for preparing the body for activity and aiding in recovery post-exercise. Dynamic stretching, foam rolling, and activation exercises help increase blood flow, improve flexibility, and reduce muscle tension.

Address Muscle Imbalances & Movement Dysfunctions

Identifying and addressing muscle imbalances and movement dysfunctions through corrective exercise programs can help improve joint stability and reduce the risk of overuse injuries. The body is made for movement variability, and if you only have one option for performing a movement or exercise, overuse injuries tend to occur.

Nutrition & Lifestyle Factors

Nutrition and lifestyle factors play a significant role in the rehab and prevention of knee injuries, along with any injury. Adequate nutrition, hydration, and supplementation support tissue repair and recovery, while healthy lifestyle habits such as adequate and restful sleep and stress management promote overall well-being and immune function.

Pain & Its Role

Pain is an action signal sent from your brain. We are built for survival, not performance--even though we want our performance to improve. Pain is not simply structural, meaning a sore muscle or an irritated tendon. Pain is multi-factorial and our mood, thoughts, training volume, and nutrition all play a factor in to how our body interprets pain. Pain is an output, not an input.

What next?

Start with this simple program for mobility and strengthening. These exercises are a handful of exercises that can help with knee pain. And, consider the other key concepts in your lifestyle or training that may be contributing to the symptoms you're experiencing.

If after doing these exercises for a couple of weeks you don't find much improvement, don't hesitate to reach out and have a full evaluation and examination performed.

To schedule an evaluation, call us at 908-728-6887 or book a FREE 15 minute phone consult using the link below.

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