

# Traumatic Knee Injury

## Information and Exercise Leaflet for Patient's and Carers

**Your knee** can be injured during twisting, bending or falling. You may feel sharp pain or aching that can feel close to the joint or deep inside the knee.

As you get older, normal wear and tear can mean that even a small incident can cause a flare up of pain.

### Symptoms

Pain is commonly caused during walking, going up or down stairs, kneeling, turning quickly and getting out of the car / chair.

Pain is often sharp to begin with but will commonly turn to an ache within 10 days.

You may have pain and restriction bending and / or fully straightening your knee but if this is significantly limited please seek medical attention (see 'should I get medical attention section below').

### Causes

There are many ligaments, muscles and cartilage that can get injured during a fall or twist.

It is common in sports but can also occur with minor accidents like miss-judging a step.

### Should I get medical attention?

Please go to Accident and Emergency (A+E) or speak to your GP if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Your knee gives way causing you to fall or stumble.
- You cannot fully straighten your knee and it feels blocked.
- You are unable to put weight through your leg
- You developed large amounts of knee swelling immediately after your injury.
- Numbness or pins and needles in your leg below your injured knee

***Only continue to read if you have none of these symptoms.***

## Should I be resting or moving?

### Recent Injury - For the first 24 to 72 hours

- Try to rest your knee but avoid long spells of not moving at all.
- Try to move your knee gently for 30 seconds every hour when you are awake.

### After 72 hours

- You should try to use your leg more
- Try and do whatever you would normally do and stay or return to work.
- Avoid sports or heavy lifting until you have less pain and good movement
- When going up stairs reduce the strain on your knee by leading with your good leg, if there is a handrail then use it. Lead with your injured leg on the way down.

### Should I take pain killers?

- Pain killers can help you keep moving. However, it is important to discuss this with your GP, especially if you are taking other medication.

### Should I use ice or heat?

- If you have recently injured or you have any swelling in the knee then wrap crushed ice in a damp towel and hold it for 10 to 15 minutes against the part that hurts. You can do this every two to three hours. Make sure you use a damp towel between the ice and your skin to avoid ice burns.
- Alternatively you could try sport sprays and gel packs, which do a similar job.
- Some people find that heat is more relaxing. This is not recommended if you have injured your knee within the last 7 days but if you have had a recent flare up of an old knee problem then you could use a hot water bottle or heat pad. Make sure it is not too hot and doesn't directly touch your skin. You can use this for 10-15 minutes, three to four times a day.

### What about work?

- You will recover faster and everybody will benefit if you can stay at or get back to work as early as possible. Do not worry if your knee still hurts, as you may only have to do light work at first. Speak to your manager or occupational health team about how to go about this. Try to stay active and keep moving gently.

### What about sports?

- You should take time before returning to any sports after a knee injury.
- If you take part in sport too soon you could get injured again.
- You should have no swelling and be able to move your knee fully.
- You should have full or close to full strength and take weight through your leg without limping.
- Your knee should not give way or feel like it locks in place.
- Remember to warm up and stretch before sports

### **Warning Signs**

**If you have severe pain which is getting worse over several weeks, if you are unwell with back or full leg pain, or under the age of 16 years, you should consult your doctor.**

**The following symptoms are very rare, but if you suddenly develop any of them, you should consult your doctor straightaway.**

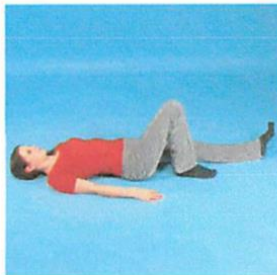
- Significant swelling to the leg not just the knee
- Feeling generally unwell
- Signs of infection i.e. night sweats that are out of the ordinary, high temperature and feeling unwell.
- Constant night pain (unable to rest/sleep)
- Unexplained weight loss

**If your symptoms fail to improve within 6 weeks with this regime you should contact your doctor for a physiotherapy referral.**

**If this is the case remember to bring a pair of shorts to change in to, this will help the physiotherapist diagnose your problem.**

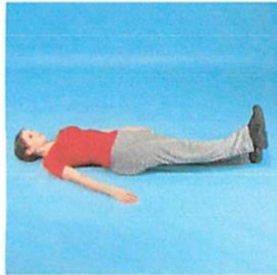


## Personal Exercise Program Knee Exercises week 1-2



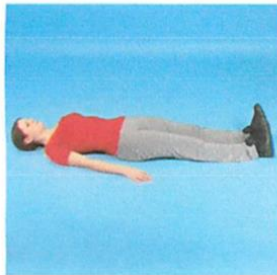
Lying on your back.  
Bend and straighten your leg.  
Repeat 10-20 times.

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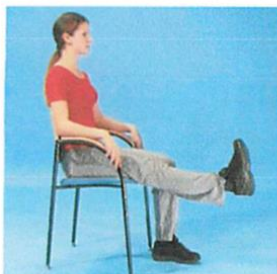
Lying on your back.  
Tighten your thigh muscle and straighten your knee. Lift your leg 20 cm off the bed.  
Hold 5 secs.  
Repeat 10-20 times.

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Lying on your back with legs straight.  
Bend your ankles and push your knees down firmly against the bed. Hold 5 secs. -  
relax.  
Repeat 10-20 times.

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Sit on a chair.  
Pull your toes up, tighten your thigh muscle and straighten your knee. Hold approx. 5  
secs. and slowly relax your leg.  
Repeat 10-20 times.

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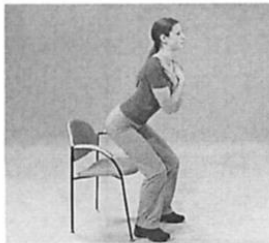
Knee Exercises week 1-2

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## Personal Exercise Program

Provided for : Traumatic Knee Ex's to commence when Wk 1 ex's are too easy  
 Provided by : Traumatic Knee Ex's Physiotherapy Date : 10/11/2014

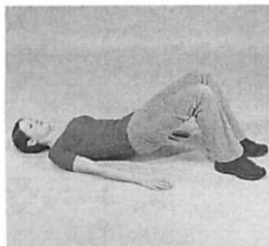


Sitting with your arms crossed.

Stand up and then sit down slowly on a chair. (This can be made easier and more difficult by changing the height of the chair)

Repeat/Aim 10-20 times.

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Lying on your back with knees bent.

Squeeze your buttocks together and lift your bottom off the floor. Return to starting position.

Repeat/Aim 10-20 times.

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**START POSITION:** Lie on the side with the pelvis square, the hips flexed to approximately 45 degrees and the knees bent. Follow the stomach to straighten the back to a neutral position.

**ACTION:** Leaving the heels together slowly lift the top knee by turning the hip out without letting the back or pelvis twist. ONLY turn out as far as a stable back and pelvis allow. Hold this position with minimal effort.

Repeat/Aim 20-30 times. L R (adpt Sahrmann PhD, PT)

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<b>Contact details</b>			
Physiotherapy Department Burnley General Hospital – Tel: 01282 803294		Physiotherapy Department Royal Blackburn Hospital – Tel: 01254 735091	