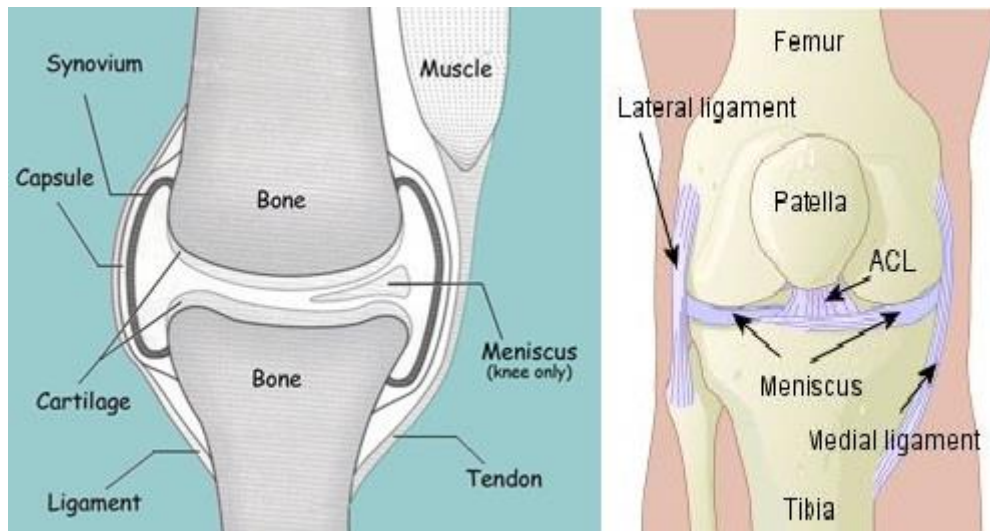


## What is causing my knee pain?

In most cases, your symptoms are unlikely to be caused by osteoarthritis (wearing of the joint). Your symptoms may stem from a change in the soft tissues that are either inside or outside the joint capsule:



Common conditions seen in young adults include:

Intra-capsular (within the joint)	Extra-capsular (surrounding the joint)
Anterior cruciate ligament injury	Joint hypermobility
Meniscus injury	Patellofemoral pain
	Patella bursitis
	Osgood-schlatters

If you experience knee pain following a traumatic event such as a fall, sudden sporting injury or road traffic accident you should seek a medical opinion as soon as possible.

## What are the common symptoms?

Your symptoms will present in different ways depending on which structure(s) are causing the issue. People can report symptoms around their knee cap, on the inner or outer side of their knee, deep inside the knee. They can also experience the feeling of their knee locking or giving way.

Symptoms may be aggravated by prolonged sitting/standing, stairs, walking and/or running.

## **What can I do to address this?**

Your symptoms can improve by following simple advice. Over the counter pain medication such as paracetamol or ibuprofen could help minimise the experience of pain. Losing weight (if you are overweight) would place less stress on the knee joint. Avoiding/minimising the duration or adapting the activity that aggravate your symptoms could also help. Exercises that do not aggravate your symptoms can improve your symptoms and positively impact on your day to day function (see below for examples).

## **What if this doesn't work?**

You should speak to your GP about your symptoms in the first instance. If appropriate, they may refer you for a course of Physiotherapy. A specialist assessment could then lead to an appropriate management plan.

## **Further information**

### **'I have cracking sounds coming from the knee'**

Scientific evidence has suggested that the sound of cracking from the knee joint (in the absence of pain) on movement is not a sign of damage and can actually make people more fearful of engaging in the exercises that would help engage in exercise.

### **'I have a swollen knee'**

Ice therapy can help to minimise knee swelling which can contribute to knee pain. You can use the following three steps to help bring down swelling and pain:

Rest – try not to move the joint too much, and avoid activities that will put pressure on it

Ice – gently hold an ice pack (or a bag of frozen peas) wrapped in a tea towel on the area for around 10 minutes at a time and repeat every few hours during the day

Elevate – keep the area raised to the level of your heart as much as possible

### **'My knee locks up and it is difficult to straighten my knee'**

Possible causes of knee locking could be muscle spasms or meniscus injury. Meniscus injury can occur by twisting your knee. The job of the meniscus is to cushion the knee joint

and provide an greater surface area for the two bones that make up the knee joint move with ease. A physiotherapist will be able to assess and treat issues involving the meniscus.

## **‘My knee gives way or I hear a popping sound when I twisted my knee’**

The cruciate ligaments (anterior/posterior cruciate) help control the movement of the two bones that make up the knee joint. The anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) is commonly injured during twisting motion of the knee and most associated with running and sporting activities. A physiotherapist is ideally placed to assess and treat issues involving symptoms of knee giving way/instability.

## **Joint hypermobility**

Hypermobility means your joints are more flexible than other people's (you may think of yourself as being double jointed). When this causes pain, it might be joint hypermobility syndrome. The main aim of treatment is to improve the strength of muscles surrounding your joints.

## **Patellofemoral pain**

Patellofemoral pain syndrome is often caused by imbalances in the muscles surrounding the knee, which can affect the kneecap (patella) and cartilage within the joint. The aim of treatment is to optimise any muscle imbalances and further strengthen the knee and/or hip joint. Some stretching exercises may also be of benefit.

## **Knee bursitis**

Bursitis happens when the fluid-filled sacs (bursa) that cushion your joints become inflamed. Symptoms of bursitis can be painful, tender and swollen joints. It can usually be treated at home and should go away in a few weeks.

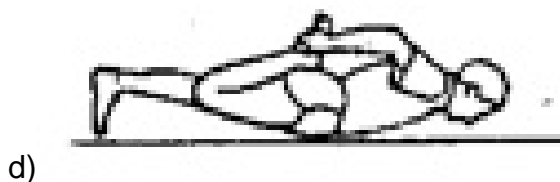
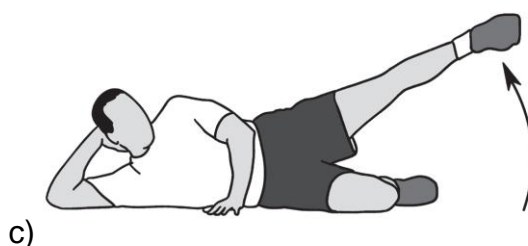
## **Osgood-schlatters**

Osgood Schlatters is a very common cause of knee pain in young athletes where the bony lump below your knee cap becomes painful and swollen during and after exercise. The reason for this is the main thigh muscle (the quadriceps) attaches to this bony lump. When our bones grow our muscles have to stretch so during a growth spurt the thigh muscle becomes tight.

## **Knee exercises**

Start by trying exercise ‘a’ as seen below. Look to complete 10 repetitions in a slow and controlled manner 3 times with a rest in between. If this movement does not aggravate your symptoms then you may want to try exercise ‘b’, ‘c’ and ‘d’ using the same number of

repetitions. Stop if these movements aggravate your symptoms but you should expect your hip muscles to feel tired



If you have followed the information and advice in this leaflet and your symptoms are not improving or if they start to worsen it is important you speak to a medical professional.