

Self Help For Knee Sprains

Information for patients

What is a knee sprain?

A knee sprain can occur when you injure or twist your knee awkwardly. This may cause damage to the tissues in and around the knee such as the muscles, ligaments and/or cartilage.

Risk Factors

- Sports involving changing direction suddenly
- Contact sports
- Previous knee injuries

Symptoms

Pain, swelling and/or bruising may occur in and around the knee initially following injury. The swelling may appear immediately or after some time. You may have difficulty bending and straightening the knee and struggle with walking.

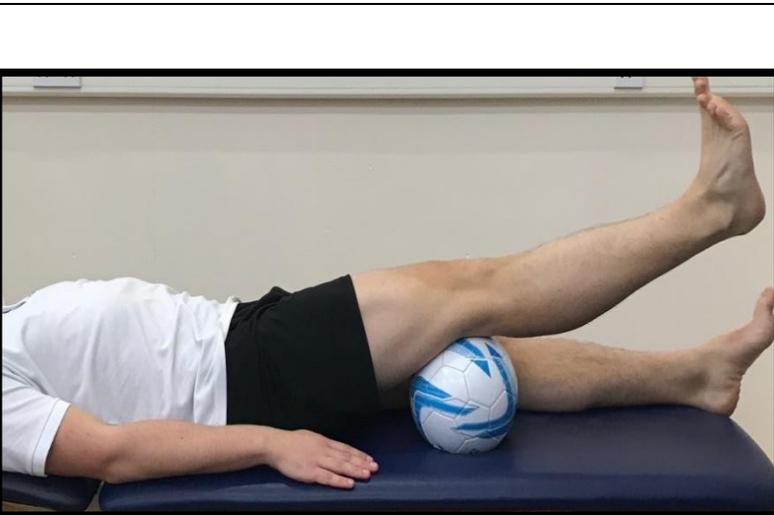
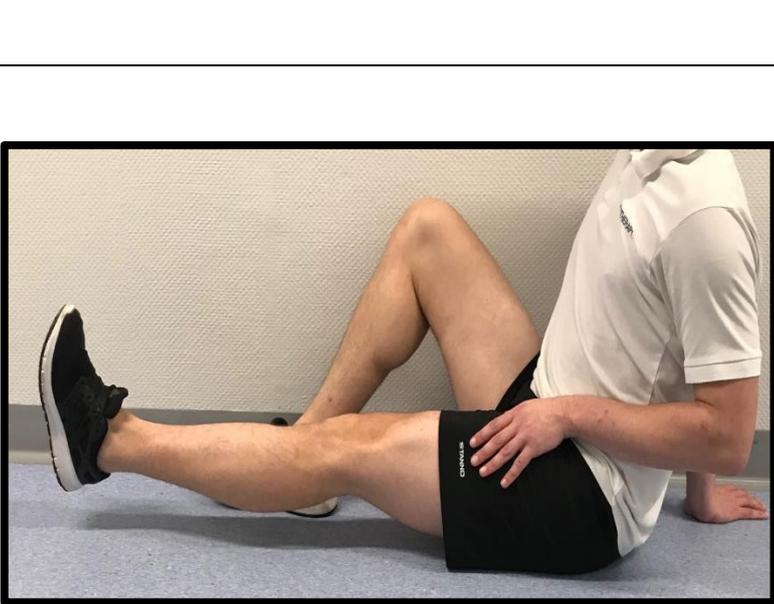
Prognosis/Outlook

You are likely to make a very good recovery from a knee sprain. However, it may take up to three months for the pain and stiffness to subside. Depending on the severity of the sprain and tissue involved, you may be referred for an orthopaedic opinion.

Management – Early Stage

- **Protection** - The use of a support or strapping at this stage maybe helpful. These are available at most chemists or sports shops
- **Rest** - Crutches may be necessary in the first instance but not in all cases. Walking as normally as possible is important in order to help the soft tissues heal correctly. Keep as mobile as your pain allows
- **Ice** - Apply ice to the swollen area for 10-15 minutes at a time three to four times each day. Use a bag of frozen peas or ice pack placed in a towel. Be careful if you have circulatory or sensation problems with the leg
- **Compression** - Use your support or strapping whilst there is still swelling present. This will help to reduce the swelling and prevent further swelling
- **Elevation** - When resting raise your foot higher than your heart with the leg supported
- **Pain relief** - You may take as prescribed or as discussed with a pharmacist as it is important to manage pain early on after your injury

Exercises: Complete every two hours as soon as possible after the injury.

Diagram	Explanation
	<p>Sitting up with your leg straight.</p> <p>Bend your ankle and push your knee down firmly against the towel.</p> <p>Hold approximately five seconds and slowly relax.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times.</p>
	<p>Lying on your back put a cushion/ball under the knee to be exercised.</p> <p>Exercise your leg by pulling your foot and toes up, tightening your thigh muscle and straightening the knee. Keep the knee on the cushion/ball.</p> <p>Hold approximately five seconds and slowly relax.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times.</p>
	<p>Lying on your back, sitting with one leg straight and the other leg bent, exercise your straight leg by pulling the toes up, straightening the knee and lifting the leg 20 cm off the bed.</p> <p>You can vary the exercise by having your foot pointing either upwards, inwards or outwards.</p> <p>Hold approximately five seconds and slowly relax.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times.</p>



Sit on a chair with your feet on the floor.

Bend your knee as much as possible. Use a towel to help slide your knee underneath the chair.

Repeat 10 times.



Slowly crouch keeping your back straight and heels on the floor.

Stay down for approximately 20 seconds and feel the stretching in your buttocks and the front of your thighs.

Repeat 10 times.



Stand on one foot.

Keep your balance.

Aim for 30 seconds.

Repeat five times.

Frequently Asked Questions

When is it safe to drive?

As soon as you feel comfortable and able to perform an emergency stop/manoeuvres.

When can I return to work?

As soon as you feel comfortable and able. Office based workers may find it easier to return to work sooner than someone who may be on their feet for long periods.

My knee is clicking and clunking, is this normal?

Yes it can be until the knee is back to full strength and flexibility. Sometimes it can be a sign of an injury within the knee joint. If you are concerned, please contact your GP or Physiotherapist

When can I return to sport?

Most sports and physical activities can be started within six to eight weeks of a knee sprain.

What should I do if my knee does not settle?

If your symptoms persist for six weeks or your knee is giving way or locking after following the advice in this leaflet, please complete a physio self-referral form from your local GP reception.

This information is available in audio, Braille, large print and other languages. To request a copy, please ask a member of staff.

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