

# Knees hurt *during exercise?*

Knee pain can happen for many different reasons. But if you notice pain in the front of the knee during sports, jumping or running, you could have patellofemoral pain syndrome, also known as runner's knee.

## WHAT CAUSES IT?

Runner's knee is common in athletes, especially young adults and females. It may be caused by:

- Tight muscles in the legs, especially the hamstrings and Achilles tendons
- A kneecap that is slightly out of place
- Thigh muscles that are too weak
- Wearing shoes with poor support during exercise
- Exercising too hard or too long

## WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT RUNNER'S KNEE

Runner's knee often feels better with home care. Try these tips:

- Use ice packs on the knee for up to 20 minutes, several times a day.
- Replace the activity that hurts the knee with lower impact activities.
- Lightly wrap the knee in an elastic bandage.
- Rest the knee when you can, lifting it up higher than the heart.
- Take ibuprofen or naproxen for more bothersome pain, but ask a doctor before taking it more than seven days.

## WHAT DOES RUNNER'S KNEE FEEL LIKE?

Runner's knee usually has one or more of these symptoms:

- The kneecap hurts when you touch it.
- It feels like the kneecap is grinding or clicking when you move it.
- The kneecap or front of the knee hurts after you've been active.



## PREVENTION MATTERS

You can help prevent runner's knee if you:

- Stretch all your muscles, especially the legs, before and after exercise.
- Do a warm-up before you start vigorous workouts.
- Increase your exercise slowly.
- Maintain a healthy weight to reduce knee stress.

See a doctor if knee pain doesn't get better with a few days of rest and home care. Your doctor can recommend physical therapy, shoe inserts or other treatments to help. Always ask your doctor before starting a new exercise program.

Source: American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons