

## Knee Injury Advice

You may have injured your knee by damaging either the ligaments (sprain) or the muscles or tendons (strain). This will cause pain, swelling, stiffness and a limp. The following advice should help you to recover.

Things you should do	Things you shouldn't do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rest for the first 24/48 hours after your injury but avoid long spells of not moving at all – you should move it gently for 10 to 20 seconds every hour when you are awake.</li> <li>• Keep your knee raised (elevated) with your foot higher than your bottom to help prevent/reduce the swelling</li> <li>• Use ice packs (frozen peas wrapped in a towel will do), for 15 -20 minutes every 2 hours if you can during the day for the first 48-72 hours following the injury.</li> <li>• Take the recommended medication to relieve the pain – this can be bought over the counter from a pharmacy or local shops. Follow the instructions on the packet/bottle</li> <li>• Exercise you knee gently 4-6 times a day, once most of the swelling has gone down. If the movements hurt, try to make them smaller</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use ice packs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ over areas of skin that are in poor condition</li> <li>○ if you have poor sensation to cold</li> <li>○ if you know you have poor circulation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Place ice packs directly onto your skin as they can burn.</li> <li>• Do not leave ice on while asleep</li> <li>• Wear any support bandage in bed</li> <li>• Stand still for long periods</li> </ul>
<p><b>Please remember - For the first 72 hours after a sprain or strain, you should avoid:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Heat</b> - such as hot baths, or heat packs,</li> <li>• <b>Alcohol</b> - this will increase bleeding and swelling, and decreases healing,</li> <li>• <b>Running</b> - or any other exercise that could cause more damage, and</li> <li>• <b>Massage</b> - which may increase bleeding and swelling.</li> <li>• <b>Driving</b> – as this will aggravate the pain and/or swelling because of the pressure on the pedals and is also unsafe as you may be unable to brake suddenly in an emergency.</li> </ul>	

## **What Exercises can I do?**

The following exercises can help to get you moving normally, and safely, if you've a muscle or joint problem affecting your knee.

**Begin these flexibility exercises as soon as you can** - provided they don't cause excessive pain – as they are designed to mobilise the joint, strengthen your muscles and so help you back to full function, flexibility and strength of your knee. Start by doing 5 repetitions of each exercise, 3 times a day. The repetitions and sets are a guideline, add an extra 1 or 2 repetitions every few days as long as you feel comfortable.

After 48 hours, try to use your knee more - exercise really helps your knee and can relieve pain. Do whatever you normally would and stay at or return to work - this is important and is the best way to get better.

## **How to tell if you're exercising at the right level**

When doing exercise you should listen to your pain levels, especially in the early stages. You may find that these exercises increase your symptoms slightly in the beginning. However, they should get easier over time. It can be helpful to rate your pain out of 10 (0 being no pain and 10 being the worst pain you have ever had), for example:

**Green** 1 to 3 - mild pain

**Amber** 4 to 6 – moderate pain

**Red** 7 to 10 - severe pain

Aim to keep your pain within a rating of 0 to 5. If your pain gets above this level, you can change the exercises by:

- reducing the number of times, you do a movement

- reducing the speed of a movement

- increasing rest time between movements

**If you are at all concerned about your injury, please contact the relevant**

**Emergency Department: Grange University Hospital: 01633 493287**


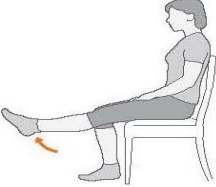
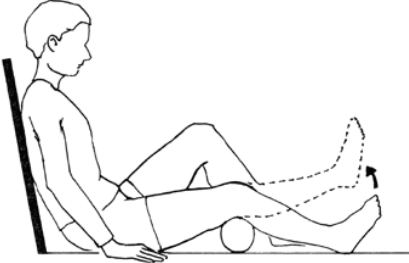



**Or Minor Injury Unit (MIU):**




**Royal Gwent Hospital: 01633 234056**

**Nevill Hall Hospital: 01873 732073**

**Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YYF) MIU 01443 802353**

**Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan (YAB) MIU: 01495 363318**

	<p><b>Straight Leg Raising (Lying)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With your injured knee straight, and the other knee bent, pull your toes towards you and lift up your sore leg by (at least) 1 centimetre or more off the floor. You should aim to get it off the floor by about 15cms/ 6ins</li> <li>• Hold for 5 seconds and lower gently to the ground. Repeat 5 times.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Straight Leg Raising (seated)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With both feet on the ground, lift and straighten your injured knee as far as is comfortable</li> <li>• Hold this position for 5 seconds before returning your leg to the floor</li> <li>• Repeat 5 times.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Wedge and Weight</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sit with a rolled- up towel or blanket under your sore knee.</li> <li>• Push your knee down onto the towel and straighten your knee as much as is comfortable.</li> <li>• Hold for 5 seconds then lower leg slowly.</li> <li>• Repeat 5 times.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Lying knee hold</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lie on your back, pull your toes towards you and push the back of your sore knee firmly down against the floor or bed</li> <li>• Hold for 5 seconds then relax</li> <li>• Repeat 5 times.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Lying knee bend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With both knees straight, slowly bend your sore knee by sliding your foot along the floor or bed towards you as far as is comfortable</li> <li>• Hold for 5 seconds then lower leg slowly. Repeat 5 times.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Seated knee bend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sit on a firm chair with your feet touching the floor.</li> <li>• Gently pull your foot back underneath the chair, as far as you can.</li> <li>• Hold for 5 seconds then relax.</li> <li>• Repeat 5 times.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Knee squats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold onto a chair or work surface for support.</li> <li>• Squat down until your kneecap covers your big toe.</li> <li>• Return to standing.</li> <li>• Repeat at least 10 times.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Hamstring stretch</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lie on your back with a cushion under your head.</li> <li>• Pull your knee onto your stomach helping with your hands.</li> <li>• Push your other leg down towards the floor. Hold for 20 seconds - relax.</li> <li>• Repeat 5 times.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Alternative Hamstring stretch.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sit at the edge of a chair or bed</li> <li>• Straighten your affected leg out in front of you and rest your heel on the floor or a small stool.</li> <li>• Sit up straight, then gently bend forward at the hips until you feel a gentle stretch on the back of your leg. Hold for 20 seconds - relax.</li> <li>• Repeat 5 times.</li> </ul>

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## What should I take for Pain?

No pain relief may be needed if the sprain is mild. However, painkillers, such as **Paracetamol**, are useful to ease pain, but it is best to take them regularly for a few days or so rather than every now and then.

They can be bought over the counter from a pharmacy or local shops. Make sure you don't take any other product containing Paracetamol.

**With all medication it is essential that you follow the instructions on the packet or bottle carefully.**

**Anti-inflammatory painkillers** can also be used. These relieve pain and may also limit inflammation and swelling, however if you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant you shouldn't use them.

Side effects sometimes occur with anti-inflammatory painkillers - stomach pain and bleeding from the stomach, are the most serious. Some people with asthma, high blood pressure, kidney failure or heart failure may not be able to take them either. You can buy Ibuprofen at pharmacies both in tablet and gel form. There is less risk of side-effects with the gel, however, the amount of the drug that gets into the bloodstream is much less than with tablets and it is important that you use enough gel.

## When can I return to normal activities?

If you participate in an active hobby then it is advised that you do not return to this until you have full strength, full range of movement and you can weight bear on your knee normally without experiencing pain or swelling.

For those returning to sport, swimming is good exercise, but practice specific activities such as knee bends and squats, building them up gradually before returning to full training sessions and competition.

**If you are concerned about your progress, or if you have not improved within 10 days, we advise you to contact your GP, or self-refer to your local physiotherapy department or return to the Emergency Department/MIU department where you were seen.**

Physio self-referral link: [abuhb.nhs.wales/hospitals/a-z-of-services/physiotherapy/bone-joint-muscle-physiotherapy-services-musculoskeletal](https://abuhb.nhs.wales/hospitals/a-z-of-services/physiotherapy/bone-joint-muscle-physiotherapy-services-musculoskeletal)

If you are unable to do this electronically you should call 01495 768715 between 8.30am and 4.00pm Monday to Friday.

## References:

<https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/sprains-strains/#!scenario>

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/muscle-bone-and-joints/exercises/exercises-for-knee-problems#introduction>

Knee exercises for runners - NHS ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk))