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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Aneurin Bevan
University Health Board

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"> • 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 couple minutes every ½ hour when you are awake. • Keep your knee raised (elevated) with your foot higher than your bottom to help prevent/reduce the swelling • Use ice packs or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel, for 15 -20 minutes every 2 hours if you can during the day for the first 48-72 hours following the injury. • 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 • Exercise you knee gently 3-4 times a day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use ice packs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ over areas of skin that are in poor condition ○ if you have poor sensation to cold ○ if you know you have poor circulation. • Place ice packs directly onto your skin as they can burn. • Do not leave ice on while asleep • Wear any support bandage in bed • Stand still for long periods
<p>Please remember - For the first 72 hours after a sprain or strain, you should avoid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heat - such as hot baths, or heat packs, • Alcohol - this will increase bleeding and swelling, and decreases healing, • Running - or any other exercise that could cause more damage, and • Massage - which may increase bleeding and swelling. • Driving – 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. 	

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. A gradual return to normal activities is the best way to get good results after a knee injury.

1. Lie on your back and gently slide your heel towards your bottom x10



2. Sit on a chair and lift foot up to straighten knee and then bend knee back down under chair x10

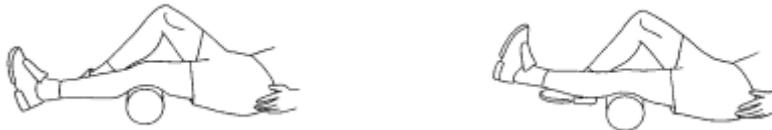


**If you are at all concerned about your injury, please contact the relevant
Emergency Department: Grange University Hospital: 01633 493287
Or Minor Injury Unit (MIU):
Royal Gwent Hospital: 01633 234056
Nevill Hall Hospital: 01873 732073
Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YYF) MIU 01443 802353
Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan (YAB) MIU: 01495 363318**

3. Sit with legs out straight. Push knee down into the bed or floor so you feel your thighs tighten. Hold count of 10 and then relax x10



4. Put a rolled-up towel or similar under your knee. Rest your knee on the towel and push down into the towel so ankle lifts off the bed x10



5. Stand on bad leg and lower and lift opposite knee up and down with control x 10



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 (like Ibuprofen) 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, heart failure or those on blood thinning medications 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.

If you participate in an active hobby then when you feel comfortable you can gradually start to do them again. For those returning to sport, swimming is good exercise, practice specific activities such as knee bends and squats, building them up as you gradually return 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:



[Aneurin Bevan University Health Board Physiotherapy Service \(wales.nhs.uk\)](https://www.wales.nhs.uk)

If you are unable to do this electronically you should call 0300 3732539 between 8.30am and 4.00pm Monday to Friday.

References:

Sprains and strains | Health topics A to Z | CKS | NICE
Exercises for knee muscle and joint problems | NHS inform
Knee exercises for runners - NHS

**This document is available in Welsh/
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**