

Knee Sprain/Strain

Fact Sheet

Information contained in this fact sheet is a guideline for care only. Please consult with your doctor or health professional to make sure that this information is right for you.

Your fracture

You have sustained an injury to your knee, which may have involved overstretching the ligaments, muscles and/or injury to the cartilage within the knee.

Your injury has been assessed as not requiring specialist orthopaedic care and it is likely you will make a good recovery.

Treatment

Treat the injury using the R.I.C.E principle for the first 2 – 3 days post-injury:

- **Rest** and avoid activities that cause pain. Use crutches if you are unable to put weight on your leg comfortably
- **Ice** – apply ice in a damp tea towel to the area for 15 – 20 minutes every 1 – 2 hours when awake
- **Compression** – apply a firm bandage over your knee, making sure blood flow is not restricted nor pain increased. Remove before bed
- **Elevation** – elevate your foot above the level of your heart when possible.

Some knee injuries may require may require a brace or splint to support the knee during healing.

An Xray helps to diagnose a fractured bone; they do not show injury to ligaments, muscles or cartilage.

Healing Timeframe

- On average simple knee sprains and strains usually recover within 1 – 2 weeks.
- If you are using a brace or splint, gradually discard it over 3 – 6 weeks as pain settles.
- If there is a sense of instability or lack of “trust” in your knee, see your GP for advice.

Getting Back to Normal

- Early weight bearing can help increase the speed of healing. In the first 2 – 3 days minimise the amount of walking you do, but when you do walk, try to walk as normal as possible
- Slowly increase your activity levels as pain allows. Mild pain is expected, however significant pain should be avoided
- Make sure to keep your unaffected joints, such as your hip and ankle, moving freely
- It might take a few weeks for swelling and bruising to reduce completely. If not significantly better after 1 – 2 weeks contact your GP for advice and possible referral to physiotherapy.
- Completing the simple exercises on page 2 can greatly improve knee recovery.

Pain Relief and Comfort

Regular pain relief such as paracetamol and anti-inflammatory medication can be used.

When can I...?

Weight bear	As pain, range of motion and instability allows
Play sport	As pain, range of motion and instability allows
Return to work	Consult your doctor
Drive	Consult your doctor

The above timeframes are a guide only and do not apply to all knee sprains/strains.

Worries or concerns

For any immediate concerns or questions regarding your injury please contact:

- **Your General Practitioner (GP).**
They are able to speak directly to an Orthopaedic team at Redcliffe Hospital or Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital if required.
- **13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)** for health advice, triage and referral from a registered nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and at the cost of a local call. 13 HEALTH provides access to interpreting services for callers not confident with English.

In a medical emergency go to the nearest hospital emergency department or call an ambulance (dial 000).

Exercise

These exercises should be completed as pain allows. More repetitions of the exercises done more frequently (i.e. multiple times a day) will benefit more than one long session a week.

Quad Sets

Squeeze the back of your knee down into your bed and tighten your thigh muscles. Hold for 5 seconds.

Repeat 10 times, 3 times daily.



Heel slides

Slowly slide your foot towards your buttocks, bending your knee up as much as possible. Slide your foot back down to starting position.

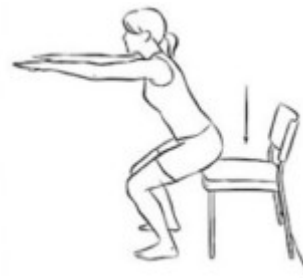
Repeat 10 times, 3 times daily.



Half Squats

With feet shoulder-width apart, squat down half-way, as if going to sit on a chair. Concentrate on good control.

Repeat 20 times, 3 times daily



Single leg squat and hold

Standing on injured leg, complete half squat and hold down for 10 seconds. Return to starting position.

Repeat 10 times, 5 times daily.

