



# Fit For Sisters

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Columnist

## Knee pain

Tales of knee pain and the reasons why someone shouldn't exercise, is a dialogue that happens among all walks of people. Knee injury and pain constitutes a large proportion of orthopedic conditions. In fact the No. 3 orthopedic treatment is for knee meniscus pain. Knee pain is nagging, uncomfortable, and disheartening for those who can no longer do the things they enjoy. But the "can't do" attitude isn't helping correct your knee pain. Sudden onset intense knee pain can be attributed to a specific movement, fall, twist etc. This type of pain needs to be taken very

cautiously. This is when rest is prescribed because tissue damage can occur; ignoring the swelling and intense pain will make things worse. You will undoubtedly know if they fall into these circumstances. The achy soreness that comes about with increased activity, or perhaps the pressure and pinching feeling in certain movements can all be looked at as an opportunity to tune the knees up, to avoid further problems down the road. Below are some examples and ways to remedy that kind of knee pain: Pain on the outside of the knee, also known as runner's knee, is a condition often of imbalanced quadriceps muscles and a tight outer structure called the IT band. It is also common for this to result from inadequate hip/knee angles. All of these can (and should) be corrected with exercise. Evaluate the tightness on the outer edge of the thigh by leaning from the side into the wall without bending the back laterally. Does the outer hip and side of the thigh feel tight? Try stretching this. Next, squat down and observe knee tracking (the path the knees take). Do they stay over the toes, or come inside the big toe as

you squat in front of the mirror? If they're falling in, hip exercises will help. A simple exercise is a side-lying leg lift done with a resistance band placed around the knee. Next is pain in front of the knee, also known as jumper's knee. This typically manifests itself in the front of the knee, below the kneecap. It is often found in athletes who jump and land a lot, stressing the patellar tendon. In many, it is a form of improper knee flexion or imbalanced thigh to hip activation while squatting. A simple test: Squat down facing to the side of a mirror. Are the knees being pushed out in front of the body beyond the toes? This is a tell-tale sign. To work on this, first learn how to squat with the hips sitting back and the weight balanced on the feet. If you raise up on their toes in a squat, ankle mobility will help your movement improve. Also, work on taking the load away from the front of the thigh by strengthening hamstrings and glutes. A back-lying, knee-bent, feet-on-the-floor hip extension is a great place to start. And then there is general joint pain and stiffness. While many people elect to forgo exercise due to arthritis or joint inflammation, this isn't always the best option.



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A lot of knee pain can be corrected with exercise.

Harvard Medical School published a statement extolling the virtues of exercising for easing arthritic pain. This is because the synovial fluid in the knee is stimulated with an increase in activity. This fluid reduces friction between cartilage in the knee joint. Another good reason to stick with exercise is that a healthy muscular system will also promote a more stable skeletal structure, particularly at the joints. A joint held in a tighter position is going to have better structural integrity, and less painful shifting. Starting with walking is a good idea, but also use leg exercises with proper form to build up the surrounding muscles.

Sit-to-stand is a good beginner exercise. Stand in front of a chair, feet just wider than the hips, slightly pointing the toes out. With arms in front of the body sit the butt back toward the chair and begin to bend the knee. Slowly lower to a seated position then press back up into a stand. With a proactive approach, managing knee pain doesn't have to mean giving up activities or exercise. With proper care, pain can be reduced. Constraints and challenges are a part of life. It should be noted that knee pain might improve, but mitigation cannot not assured. For more information contact Andrew@sistersathleticclub.com.



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