

WHAT IS CAUSING MY KNEE PAIN?

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Knee pain can be caused by disease, injury, joint alignment issues or muscle dysfunction.

The most common disease is **osteoarthritis**. “Osteo” means bone, and “arthro” means joint, and “itis” means inflammation. So literally, OA (osteoarthritis) is inflammation of the bone at a joint, but OA is the term used when the cartilage at the end of the bone that cushions the joint gradually wears away, resulting in pain and inflammation. Bone on bone seen on X-rays means the cartilage has completely worn away.

Our goals as physical therapists is to teach you how to slow the degenerative process, treat your pain and inflammation, stretch tight soft tissues to allow freer joint motion and strengthen the muscles around the joint without exacerbating your pain. Stronger muscles surrounding painful joint(s) will now take the compressive forces of your activities rather than your vulnerable joint(s).

Knee injuries can be caused by a blow or a sudden movement that strains the knee beyond its normal range of movement. Repetitive activities such as squatting, kneeling, running, biking, hiking or climbing can also cause knee pain. We can identify if the source of pain is from the knee joint itself or the knee cap (patella). The patellofemoral joint is made from the thigh bone (femur) and the patella which rides in a groove on the femur. The undersurface of the patella has cartilage and can be your source of pain.

Muscle dysfunction (difficult function) or **joint imbalances (poor alignment)** in the spine, hip, knee, ankle or foot can cause your knee pain.

When you have your initial evaluation session with us a review of your medical history, surgeries, medications and a thorough physical examination will be performed of the back, hips, knees, ankles and feet. A series of specialized movement tests will be provided to help pinpoint the precise source of your pain. We can identify if there is an alignment issue, fracture, ligament or cartilage injury, tendonitis, bursitis, impingement, a pinched nerve, a tear or muscle imbalance causing dysfunction. In some cases the results of the tests might indicate the need for a referral to an orthopedist or for imaging tests to further identify the problem and appropriate course of treatment.

The physical examination helps us develop a **personalized treatment plan** for the physical therapy office setting and for at home. Your treatment plan will include Pain/Primal Reflex Release Techniques (PRRT) and other manual therapies to reduce your pain. For most, pain is reduced at least 50 percent at the end of the first session. The manual therapies will also help restore joint and muscle balance. Kinesiotaping, McConnell taping or bracing may be indicated. Modalities such as biofeedback, ice, heat, iontophoresis, ultrasound and electrical stimulation may be used to help manage pain while pain free movement is restored with therapeutic exercise, functional training and postural correction. As always,

our focus is on getting your pain and difficult function under control as you learn self-care and home exercise techniques to reach your goals.

For some **knee surgery** is required. It is optimal to rehabilitate the back and lower extremity prior to surgery. The focus in our care is providing pain management techniques and teaching you how to avoid activity and exercise that increases or causes your pain. It is very important to have us guide you through these steps. Going into surgery with the least amount of inflammation or swelling and the most strength creates a better surgical outcome.

After surgery, we will, in consultation with your orthopedic surgeon, be able to tell you how much activity you can do depending on the type of knee surgery you undergo. Post-operative knee rehabilitation is progressive and typically starts with instruction on how to use a walker, crutches or a cane. Gradually you will learn how to walk without the assistive device depending on your progress with range of motion and strength. We consult with your surgeon on weight bearing status (how much body weight the surgical site can manage). As you gain joint motion, muscle flexibility and strength, a balance and functional training program is initiated. If you play a sport or enjoy a particular recreational activity, your program will be geared toward getting you back in action.

If you are interested in having us help you with your knee pain or difficult function then contact us at (585) 396-1400. You can also email us at Zoe@lakecountrypt.com or Robert@lakecountrypt.com. For more information about Lake Country Physical Therapy and SportsCare, PC, visit us at www.lakecountrypt.com.