

PATELLAR CONTUSION (BRUISED KNEE)

What is a bruised knee (patellar contusion)?

A patellar contusion is a bruise on your kneecap.

How does it occur?

A bruised kneecap occurs from a direct injury to your kneecap. This usually happens from falling onto your knee or by being hit by an object.

What are the symptoms?

You will have pain directly over your kneecap. You may also have pain underneath your kneecap. You may have swelling in your knee. You may have pain walking or running. The outside of your knee may become swollen if the bursa is bruised. The bursa is a fluid filled sac just in front of the patella.

How is it diagnosed?

Your provider will ask you about your symptoms and examine your knee. He or she may order an X-ray.

How is it treated?

Treatment may include:

- putting ice packs on your knee for 20-30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours for the first 2 to 3 days or until the pain and swelling goes away
- elevating your knee to help any swelling go away
- taking a medicine such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen
- using crutches if needed

You will be given rehabilitation exercises to help you return to your sport or activity. While you are recovering from your injury, you may need to change your sport or activity to one that does not make your condition worse. For example, you may need to swim or bicycle instead of run.

How long will the effects last?

The effects of a bruised kneecap may last several days to weeks or longer. It may take longer if the back of the kneecap is injured.

When can I return to my normal activities?

Everyone recovers from an injury at a different rate. Return to your activities will be determined by how soon your knee recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been since your injury has occurred. In general, the longer you have symptoms before you start treatment, the longer it will take to get better. The goal of rehabilitation is to return you to your normal activities as soon as is safely possible. If you return too soon you may worsen your injury.

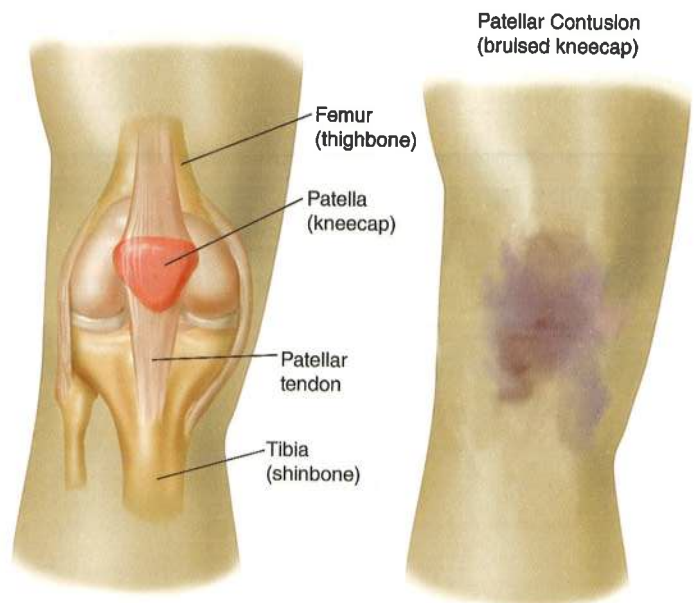
You may safely return to your normal activities when, starting from the top of the list and progressing to the end, each of the following is true:

- Your injured knee can be fully straightened and bent without pain.
- Your knee and leg have regained normal strength compared to the uninjured knee and leg.
- You are able to walk, bend, and squat without pain.

What can I do to prevent a bruised kneecap?

Most bruised kneecaps are caused by accidents that cannot be prevented. If you are in a sport that has knee protection, be sure that your equipment fits properly.

PATELLAR CONTUSION (BRUISED KNEE)



PATELLAR CONTUSION REHABILITATION EXERCISES

You can do the hamstring stretch right away. When the pain in your knee has decreased, you can do the quadriceps stretch and start strengthening the thigh muscles using the rest of the exercises.

1. STANDING HAMSTRING STRETCH: Place the heel of your leg on a stool about 15 inches high. Keep your knee straight. Lean forward, bending at the hips until you feel a mild stretch in the back of your thigh. Make sure you do not roll your shoulders and bend at the waist when doing this or you will stretch your lower back instead. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times for each leg.



STANDING HAMSTRING STRETCH

5. STRAIGHT LEG RAISE: Lie on your back with your legs straight out in front of you. Bend one knee and place the foot flat on the floor. Tighten up the top of your thigh muscle on the opposite leg and lift that leg about 8 inches off the floor, keeping the thigh muscle tight throughout. Slowly lower your leg back down to the floor. Do 3 sets of 10 on each side.



STRAIGHT LEG RAISE



QUADRICEPS STRETCH

2. QUADRICEPS STRETCH: Stand an arm's length away from the wall, facing straight ahead. Brace yourself by keeping one hand against the wall. With your other hand, grasp the ankle of the opposite leg and pull your heel toward your buttocks. Don't arch or twist your back. Keep your knees together. Hold this stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times on each side.



STEP-UP

6. STEP-UP: Stand with the foot of one leg on a support (like a block of wood) 3 to 5 inches high. Keep your other foot flat on the floor. Shift your weight onto the leg on the support and straighten the knee as the other leg comes off the floor. Lower your leg back to the floor slowly. Do 3 sets of 10.

3. SIDE-LYING LEG LIFT: Lying on your side, tighten the front thigh muscles on your top leg and lift that leg 8 to 10 inches away from the other leg. Keep the leg straight. Do 3 sets of 10.



SIDE-LYING LEG LIFT

4. QUAD SETS: Sitting on the floor with one leg straight and your other leg bent, press the back of your knee of your straight leg into the floor by tightening the muscles on the top of your thigh. Hold this position 10 seconds. Relax. Do 3 sets of 10.



QUAD SETS

7. WALL SQUAT WITH A BALL: Stand with your back, shoulders, and head against a wall and look straight ahead. Keep your shoulders relaxed and your feet 2 feet away from the wall and a shoulder's width apart. Place a soccer or basketball-sized ball behind your back. Keeping your head against the wall, slowly squat down to a 45 degree angle. Your thighs will not yet be parallel to the floor. Hold this position for 10 seconds and then slowly slide back up the wall. Repeat 10 times. Build up to 3 sets of 10.



WALL SQUAT WITH A BALL

8. KNEE STABILIZATION: Wrap a piece of elastic tubing around the ankle of one leg. Tie a knot in the other end of the tubing and close it in a door.

A. Stand facing the door on the leg without tubing and bend your knee slightly, keeping your thigh muscles tight. While maintaining this position, move the leg with the tubing straight back behind you. Do 3 sets of 10.





B. Turn 90° so the leg without tubing is closest to the door. Move the leg with tubing away from your body. Do 3 sets of 10.

C. Turn 90° again so your back is to the door. Move the leg with tubing straight out in front of you. Do 3 sets of 10.



KNEE STABILIZATION

D. Turn your body 90° again so the leg with tubing is closest to the door. Move the leg with tubing across your body. Do 3 sets of 10.



Hold onto a chair if you need help balancing. This exercise can be made even more challenging by standing on a pillow while you move the leg with tubing.

9. RESISTED TERMINAL KNEE EXTENSION: Make a loop from a piece of elastic tubing by tying a knot in both ends, and closing both knots in a door. Step into the loop so the tubing is around the back of one leg. Lift the other foot off the ground. Hold onto a chair for balance, if needed. Bend the knee on the leg with tubing about 45 degrees. Slowly straighten your leg, keeping your thigh muscle tight as you do this. Do this 10 times. Do 3 sets. An easier way to do this is to perform this exercise while standing on both legs.



RESISTED TERMINAL KNEE EXTENSION

10. STANDING CALF STRETCH: Facing a wall, put your hands against the wall at about eye level. Keep one leg back with the heel on the floor, and the other leg forward. Turn your back foot slightly inward (as if you were pigeon-toed) as you slowly lean into the wall until you feel a stretch in the back of your calf. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times. Do this exercise several times each day.



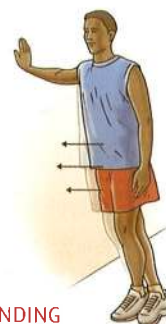
STANDING CALF STRETCH

11. CLAM EXERCISE: Lie on one side with your hips and knees bent and feet together. Slowly raise your top leg toward the ceiling while keeping your heels in contact with each other. Hold for two seconds and lower slowly. Do 3 sets of 10 repetitions.



CLAM EXERCISE

12. ILIOTIBIAL BAND STRETCH: SIDE-BENDING: Cross one leg in front of the other leg and lean the opposite direction from the front leg. Reach the arm on the side of the back leg over your head while you do this. Hold this position for 15 to 30 seconds. Return to the starting position. Repeat 3 times.



ILIOTIBIAL BAND STRETCH: SIDE-BENDING

KNEE