

# SportsWise Physiotherapy

JAN 2013

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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**OPENING HOURS :**  
Monday to Thursday  
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Saturday  
8AM - 12PM

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## OUR PHYSIOTHERAPISTS

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'SportsWise Physiotherapy'

## *Patellofemoral Pain Syndrome*

### WHAT IS IT?

It is a condition frequently seen in clinical practice, especially in runners. Hence it is also commonly called 'Runner's Knee'.

### ANATOMY

- The patella or 'kneecap' is the shield-shaped bone located at the front of the knee.
- The femur or 'thigh bone' and the patella form the patellofemoral joint.
- In a normal knee, the patella tracks or 'glides up and down' in a groove in the femur as the knee bends and straightens.

### WHAT CAUSES THE PAIN?

At the patellofemoral joint, both the patella and femur are lined with hyaline cartilage. When there is an imbalance between the muscles and other structures that control movement of the patella, 'maltracking' occurs. Additional stresses are placed on the cartilage, causing microdamage, inflammation, and pain. The resulting chemical irritation plays a further role in pain response by exciting the pain receptors on the nerve endings within the soft tissues surrounding the patellofemoral joint.

### WHAT CAUSES THE IMBALANCE?

- Poor lower limb biomechanics.
- Tight muscles and connective tissues, especially on the outside of the knee and thigh.

- Muscle weakness on the inside of the knee following surgery or due to previous knee injury.

### SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Insidious/sudden onset of a vaguely localized ache around or behind the patella, and sometimes at the back of the knee. If aggravated, the ache may turn into a sharp pain.
- Pain may occur in one or both knees.
- Pain worsens with squatting, kneeling, prolonged sitting, walking, running, as well as ascending and descending stairs.
- Pain is often associated with audible clicking/grinding under the patella and/or the sensation of 'giving way'.

### HOW CAN PHYSIOTHERAPY HELP?

The management of a patient with patellofemoral pain syndrome requires an integrated approach that includes the following:

- Reduction of pain and inflammation.
- Taping or bracing to realign the patella.
- Strengthening of the buttock muscles as well as muscles on the inside of the knee.
- Stretching of tightness muscles on the outside of the knee and thigh.
- Massage therapy.
- Correction of biomechanical abnormality.
- Joint mobilization.

*This article is intended as a guide only and does not constitute advice or treatment. If you recently suffer from knee pain and would like to see a physiotherapist, please contact us at any of our three practices.*