

Knees – A Simple Approach to Treatment and Exercise

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The knee is impacted over the course of the average lifetime, arguably, more than any other joint in the body. Upwards of 1/2 million knee arthroscopies (minimally invasive knee surgery) are said to be performed in the U.S.A. annually and that number does not seem to be trailing off. In fact, that number is exacerbated by the growing number of knee replacement procedures (1/4 million plus) now taking place each year. So what were the traffic signs that could you have you could have been watching for as you traveled your adventure of life?

The first couple was given - age and gender. Physics, Biology and Gravity are sciences/principles that take their toll regardless. Postural imbalances, limited physical strength and flexibility, athletic endeavors plus and related leg or back injuries are among the rest. But, quite simply, a wrong step off a curb can twist the knee just enough to tear a ligament or meniscus.

What follows are a few very basic recommendations meant to accommodate the average individual who is looking to deal with knee pain. Like any recommendation, they start with checking with your doctor before initiating any exercise, cardio strength, or flexibility improvement program and then always measuring your progress in terms of ability and comfort in performance of the prescribed program. Form discipline, weight selection and number of repetitions are imperatives that should be your personal guidelines. Never push beyond pain.

Walking - Nothing is better to get the heart pumping and the fluid flowing in the knee without introducing the exponential stress of pounding the knee by running. I recommend carrying 5Lb. dumbbells to increase the aerobic output of the stroll.

Lying Leg Lifts – perfect for commercial breaks while watching television and great for the lower abs. These are excellent quadriceps, gluteus and hamstring builders. Keep the knees locked (or very slightly bent), legs together and toes pointed and lift your feet two inches off the ground – this is your start and end point as you raise both legs to 12 inches at a two second count and lower back to start. You set your repetitions (10-15 is good) and try to perform 3 sets.

Toe Walking - pick a distance, get up as high as you can on your tip toes and strengthen those calves. It's a small but important muscle group (gastrocnemius and soleus) but a necessity in building the girdle that supports the knee joint complex.

Have fun, be careful and protect the joints that support your musculo-skeletal structure and you are setting yourself up for a pain free journey. Good Health and good luck!