

# PATELLAR TENDONITIS

A PARENT'S GUIDE FOR KEEPING KIDS IN THE GAME

## PATELLAR TENDONITIS

### WHAT IS PATELLAR TENDONITIS

The patellar tendon connects the kneecap (patella) to your shin bone (tibia). Tendonitis occurs when there is inflammation of the tendons, usually due to overuse. Most people with tendonitis will complain of a dull, achy pain. The patellar tendon, an extension of the quadriceps muscle group, helps your knee extend and push off the ground when your knee is bent.

### SYMPTOMS

The main symptom of patellar tendonitis is pain and/or tenderness on the front of the knee, just below the kneecap, where the patella attaches to the shinbone. While exercising, pain can be sharp; after exercise, an aching pain can persist; mild swelling in the kneecap can occasionally occur.



### CAUSES

Patellar tendonitis is often the result of repetitive motion, typically seen in jumping activities such as volleyball or basketball, but also seen in repetitive activities such as running or soccer. Tight hamstrings and quadriceps can place additional strain on the patellar tendon. Training too much, too quickly, without proper recovery time between workouts can also cause patellar tendonitis.

### TREATMENT

Treatment for patellar tendonitis includes icing, stretching and strengthening.

- You should ice the knee for 15 -20 minutes every three to four hours in the initial stages of the injury. Your doctor may also prescribe anti-inflammatories to assist with alleviating pain and swelling, and refer you to a physical therapist to assist in developing a comprehensive program including stretching, strengthening and modalities (ice and heat) to address any biomechanical deficit that may be contributing to the tendonitis.
- Rest is important for recovery. If the tendonitis is not given time to heal, it is possible for the tendon to rupture, requiring surgery.
- Even after the pain subsides, continue stretching exercises as part of your normal workout routine.

### PREVENTION

Always make sure your hamstrings and quadriceps are stretched before exercising; it eases the movement of the patella as your knee bends and extends. Being overweight places additional stress on your knee joint and ligaments. Avoid practicing on hard surfaces when practical and ensure that your footwear has proper support.

## STRETCHING

### Quad Stretch in Standing



Use a chair or table for balance. Take your heel towards your bottom, keeping your knees together and your back straight until you feel a stretch in the front of your thigh. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat 4 times at a mild to moderate stretch pain-free.

### Quads Stretch Side Lying

Lie down on your side with your shoulders, hips and knees in a straight line. You can choose where you place your bottom arm - wherever feels most

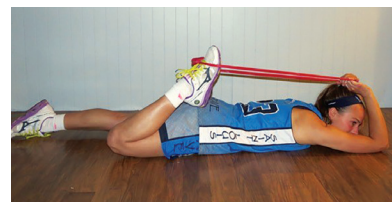


comfortable. Bring your heel towards your bottom pulling at the ankle until you feel a stretch in the front of your thigh. Hold for 30 seconds.

Repeat 3 times, 2x daily, or before and after exercise.

### Lying Quads Stretch

Lie flat down on your tummy. Bring your heel towards your bottom pulling at the ankle until you feel a stretch in the front of your thigh. If you can't reach your ankle, place a band or belt around your ankle and use that as shown in the picture.



Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times, 2x daily, or before and after exercise

**Cross Fiction Massage:** With two fingers rub over the painful area with pressure, this should be uncomfortable, but not terribly painful. This should be done for 5-7 minutes twice daily.

**Ice Massage:** Freeze water in a Dixie® cup, tear top of cup off and use directly on painful area for 7-10 minutes twice a day.

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SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare is the premier pediatric sports medicine provider in St. Louis and St. Charles. We provide exclusive, direct access to comprehensive medical care for young athletes. By working with multiple specialists and care partners, we guarantee your child will get the top care that is best suited to treat their unique injury, improving recovery time and outcome.

Specialists your child has access to through SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare include orthopedists, pulmonologists, cardiologists, radiologists, neurologists, emergency medicine physicians, adolescent medicine physicians, rehabilitation specialists, physical therapists, nutritionists and pediatric psychologists.

Partners your child has access to through SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare include SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital, SSM Health

Orthopedics, SSM Physical Therapy and SLUCare Physician Group of Saint Louis University. We also keep kids in the game through educational programs and support for parents, coaches and athletes that focus on injury prevention, proper technique and overall athletic health.

For more information about SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare or to find a specialist for your athlete, call us at **314-577-5640** or visit us at [cardinalglennon.com/sportscare](http://cardinalglennon.com/sportscare).

Expert care for young athletes by SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital and SSM Health emergency medicine specialists, **24 hours a day in the ER** at: SSM Health DePaul Hospital, SSM Health St. Clare Hospital, SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - Lake Saint Louis, SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - St. Charles.



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