

KNEE PAIN

Knee pain is common in people of all ages. It may start suddenly — such as after exercise or an injury. But it can also develop over time, starting out as minor discomfort.

Chiropractic care for knee pain includes first identifying the underlying cause of the pain, which could be an injury, mechanical problem or some kind of arthritis. Once this is known, the chiropractor can determine the best treatment for the pain.

Causes of Knee Pain

There are three main types of problems that can lead to pain in the knee.

Injuries

Damaging any part of the knee may cause pain. These parts include:

- The structures that surround the knee — the ligaments, tendons and fluid-filled sacs
- The parts of the knee itself — ligaments, cartilage and bones

Some of the most common knee injuries include:

- **Tearing of the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL)**
- **Tearing of the meniscus.** The shock absorbing cartilage between the bones of the shin and thigh
- **Knee bursitis.** Inflammation of the fluid-filled sacs that cushion the knee
- **Patellar tendinitis.** Inflammation of the tendons that connect the muscles to the bones

Mechanical problems

Changes in how the knee works can lead to pain in the knee, such as:

- **Iliotibial band syndrome.** Tightening of the ligament that runs from the pelvic bone to the outside of the tibia, which can cause it to rub on the outside of the thigh bone
- **Dislocated kneecap.** This happens when the kneecap (patella) slips out of place.
- **Hip or foot pain.** These can change how you walk and lead to more stress on the knee.

Arthritis

There are many different types of arthritis that can cause swelling and pain in the knee, including:

- Osteoarthritis
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Gout

- Septic arthritis

How Chiropractic Care Relieves Knee Pain

Chiropractors will first do a thorough physical examination. This will enable them to identify the underlying cause of the knee pain. Even though the pain is located in the knee, the problem can lie elsewhere in the body.

For example, runners often complain of a tight iliotibial (IT) band — a common condition for them. This, however, may be caused by weakness in certain muscles, which makes them walk or run unevenly. In order to stabilize the joints, the IT band has to work harder. Over time, this may cause it to tighten and lead to knee pain.

Chiropractic care may be able to relieve knee pain, especially when combined with standard medical care. Spine and joint manipulation can improve the functioning of the knee by:

- Returning the spine to normal movement
- Relaxing the muscles of the body
- Increasing the range of motion in the knee
- Improving the coordination of joints, especially the ankle, knee and hips
- Reducing other problems in the body that may be contributing to pain in the knee

Chiropractors may also use other techniques to reduce inflammation in the knee that is causing pain, such as ultrasound therapy or ice massage. They may also apply special kinds of tape to the body to treat ligament injuries. This helps stabilize the problem area and reduce inflammation.

Relief From Knee Pain and Overall Health

Excessive knee pain can often lead to people avoiding certain activities, such as walking, running or biking. Over time, the lack of physical activity can lead to other health problems and may aggravate the pain in the knee.

Early treatment of knee pain, along with the underlying causes, can help people return to their normal activities sooner. This will improve their health both in the short and long term. It will also allow athletes to return to their training and competitions.