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Chiropractic Association
of the Colorado



HAPPY KNEES

TIPS TO KEEP YOUR KNEES HEALTHY

Nearly any normal, everyday activity requires healthy knees. Whether it's picking up your child or boarding the bus, your knees need to be strong and responsive.

You've only got one set of knees – and they're important! So, get a knee up on your knees by following these tips:

IT'S NOT JUST WHAT YOU DO, IT'S WHAT YOU DON'T DO.

Many experts recommend that people get up regularly and walk around, usually at least once per hour. If you sit in one place too long, circulation stagnates and your knees may build up waste products in and around your knee causing pain and stiffness.

DRINK PLENTY OF H²O.

Even your knees need watering! If your knees pop or crack often

it could indicate scar tissue on the ligaments and tendons that may be caused by dehydration. Your body is 70 percent water and every moveable joint is surrounded by fluid that contains mostly water.

TAKE IT EASY WHEN YOU EXERCISE.

Avoid exercising on hard surfaces – the impact may damage your knees. If you play volleyball or basketball, consider "shock absorber" inserts for your shoes. Start training 6 to 8 weeks prior

to a new sports activity. Strengthening the core muscles in your back, stomach, and hips will help you play many sports in a more knee-friendly position, taking the pressure off the knees. Aim for "functional" training - exercises and activities that mimic the sport you'll be competing in.

STAND UP STRAIGHT!!

Have your posture evaluated. If you have flat

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feet or poor posture, consider better shoes or special orthotics. Many posture-related conditions can put a strain on your knees. High heels may look stunning, but they are brutal to your knees. Fit and comfort will serve you better in the long run.

WALK SOFTLY.

Walking is great for your knees, unless you land hard on your heels. This can be very jarring to your knees. Make sure your feet have a nice, soft, natural landing, somewhere between your sole and the heel. Also avoid twisting with your feet planted. When walking or standing, your knees should always be slightly flexed, never locked. Good mottos for your knees are, "*When you move your nose, move your toes*" and "*Jump straight as an arrow - land light as a feather.*"

EVALUATE YOUR WORK SPACE.

At your desk, your feet should be flat on the floor when you sit, with your thighs and shins at a 90 degree angle. Maybe you need a small foot stool to keep your feet from dangling. Possibly your desk needs to be raised off the floor so your knees are more comfortable.

LET YOUR KNEES BREATHE.

More oxygen in the tissues may help relieve achy knees. Try deep massage and stretching to oxygenate the tissues.

CHIROPRACTIC & YOUR KNEES

Many doctors of chiropractic specialize in extremity adjusting, along with spinal adjustments. A chiropractic adjustment for your knees may be just what the doctor ordered! Be kind to your knees and they'll be kind to you. ■

KNEE KNOWLEDGE

THE SHORT COURSE IN KNEE ANATOMY

The knee is the largest joint in the body. Nearly all routine, everyday activities require the use of the knee joint. The knee is made up of the lower end of the thigh bone (**femur**), which rotates on the upper end of the shin bone (**tibia**), and the knee cap (**patella**), which slides in a groove on the end of the femur. Large ligaments attach to the femur and tibia to provide stability. The long thigh muscles give the knee strength.

The joint surfaces where these three bones touch are covered with **articular cartilage**, a smooth substance that cushions the bones and enables them to move easily. All remaining surfaces of the knee are covered by a thin, smooth tissue-liner called the **synovial membrane**. This membrane releases a special fluid that lubricates the knee which reduces friction to nearly zero in a healthy knee.

Normally, all of these components work in harmony; however, disease or injury can disrupt this harmony, resulting in pain, muscle weakness, and less function. ■