

Tips, Strategies and News You Can Use To Achieve Optimum Health...For Life!

Oct 2006 Issue

Now Revealed: The Most Common Reason For Knee Pain - And How It Is Treated

Jennifer is a 35-year old runner. She's in top condition and logs an average 35 miles per week. Lately, however, something has been bothering her. About a week ago, she noticed a vague soreness and a bit of pain on the inside of her left knee. Figuring was just "an overstretched tendon", she continued her normal regimen and decided she'd "push through it". Although her knee continued to bother her during her morning runs, the pain was especially bad after she had been sitting and driving for a while.

But this morning Jennifer awoke to the same pain as before, only this time much worse. A little more concerned, she stretched longer than normal, put on her beat-up running shoes and set out on the road. Five minutes into the run Jennifer thought to herself, "Something is definitely wrong. This is not a normal pulled tendon or muscle. And the pain's getting worse".

Discouraged, she turned around and walked back home. Back in her kitchen, she grabbed her cell phone, called her physical therapist and scheduled a visit.

Later that afternoon at the clinic (and after diagnostic exam) she received the news that she had a condition called "**Patello-Femoral Syndrome**". Jennifer wanted to know more: what exactly is this condition and who does it affect?

Patello-Femoral Syndrome is an **extremely common** condition that affects the **knee joints**. It's often seen in active people (such as runners) like Jennifer. It's also the most common reason for **knee complaints** and affects people of *all ages* (Patello-Femoral refers to a specific part of the knee joint itself). Common symptoms include:

- Vague discomfort in the inner knee area.
- Pain. The pain caused by this condition can be anterior knee pain (at the front of the knee), inside the knee joint or pain underneath the patella (kneecap) itself.
- Mild **swelling** and a vague sense



Robert Inglis, MPT, CSCS

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of **tightness** or fullness in the knee area.

- Pain with **prolonged sitting**. Or pain with any other position which keeps your knees bent for an extended period of time (called the "theater" sign of pain).

- Sometimes a "**clicking**" sound in the knee will be audible.

Like most disorders, if these symptoms are ignored, the condition can get worse. Much worse. You may start to lose muscle strength and mass, especially in the quadriceps (the muscle on the front of the thigh). Going up and down stairs, jumping or climbing can become painful, and in some cases, impossible. And in certain instances when the condition progresses even further, it may cause the leg to give out completely. Patello-Femoral Syndrome is no laughing matter - and nothing to ignore.

What Causes Patello-Femoral Syndrome?

This condition is very common because the vastus medialis (the inner or "teardrop-shaped" part of the quadriceps) is **greatly underdeveloped** in the majority of the population. This is true even of runners and other athletes. The quadriceps supports the knee joint. And the medialis serves to prevent the capsule around the knee from being impinged underneath the patella. In a nutshell, Patello-Femoral Syndrome is a **muscle imbalance between them vastus medialis and the vastus lateralis** (the muscle on the outside of your leg), **along with a tight iliotibial**

band. This is a band of tissue that extends from your hip down to the outer part of your knee. Because of this imbalance, the patella tracks to the side - or it is pulled out of its natural "groove". In laypersons language, the patella starts to migrate - or move - to the side of the knee. Ouch!

If not corrected, the patella is pulled out of its normal groove and **starts rub against the femur** (big thigh bone) itself. Can you imagine the pain and inflammation when this happens? Bone is NOT supposed to rub against bone. **That's why improper loading of the patella -- or any joint for that matter -- will cause pain.** Like arthritis, bone against bone creates inflammation and pain.

Plus, if the joint is not properly aligned, parts of the joint degenerate because the joint is not getting **enough** compressive forces. Or it's getting **too much** in the way of compressive forces and the joint gets overloaded. Too much in either direction - too much compression or too little - can cause problems. Remember: the body needs to be in balance at all times.

Who Is Affected?

Females are pre-disposed to this condition more than males, due to the way the hip and femur are aligned in women. Also knock-kneed people, flat-footed runners, and people who have poor arch support also suffer from Patello-Femoral Syndrome in greater numbers. Finally, people who pronate a lot when walking (which means they turn their foot when they walk and it kind of collapses) are also at



risk for Patella-Femoral Syndrome.

The types of people I see here at *Physical Therapy Specialists* who have symptoms of Patello-Femoral Syndrome are a lot like Jennifer: runners, skiers and other athletes. Anyone who has a lot of high compressive forces in the Patello-Femoral joint are likely candidates for this disorder.

How To Prevent It

Tip #1: Listen to your body. As I've said in previous editions of this newsletter, don't ignore your pain. This is especially directed at all the guys reading this article! If you noticed, one of the things Jennifer did right was that she called and got professional help right away. She didn't wait for months and months. Which brings me to...

Tip #2: See your physical therapist. If you suspect something is wrong - or experience any of the symptoms I mentioned a moment ago, make an appointment to see your doctor or your physical therapist. Don't wait for the pain and the condition to worsen. With any illness or ailment, catching things early makes for more successful outcomes.

Tip #3: Wear the right shoes for your activity. Read last month's newsletter to discover how to

choose the right type of shoe.

Tip #4: Avoid high compressive forces on your knees. avoid any activity which causes high compressive forces in knee joint.

Tip #5: Strengthen your quadriceps. Since Patello-Femoral is caused by weak quadriceps muscle, strengthening that muscle helps. Weight training, martial arts, and other isometric exercises are perfect. Remember: most people in the U.S. have weak quadriceps muscles!

How It Is Treated

I treat this syndrome (or disorder) a lot, since it's so common. In any treatment regimen, **the primary goal is to create a straighter pathway for the patella to follow.** Initially, we want to work on avoiding motions that irritate the kneecap, such as: going into squats, climbing up and down stairs, and any other compressive forces such as skiing and high impact aerobics. And you should avoid running while you're being treated.

Treatment #1: Icing - Icing is a common remedy for many types of joint disorders. It's also effective with Patello-Femoral Syndrome. Typically, icing is applied for 15 minutes two or three times a day after activity. In other cases, it's applied once per day. In most cases, the icing regiment will continue for a period of two weeks; however, in more extreme cases, it can continue for a longer period of time.

Treatment #2. Pain Relief - The main pain-relievers used with

Patello-Femoral Syndrome are Ibuprofen, Advil and Motrin. There is quite a bit of inflammation associated with this condition, normally seen along the sides of the knees. Anti-inflammatory medications are sometimes given in conjunction with pain relievers.

Treatment #3: Surgery. In very severe cases, a patient may need surgery. The surgical technique to reverse the effects of Patello-Femoral Syndrome is called a "lateral release technique". This reduces the influence of the vastus lateralis and the IT band on the lateral tracking of the patella. In other words, things really need to be rearranged inside there! How often does it get to this point? Without early treatment, **almost all cases will end up in this severe situation.** However, physical therapy is very effective in helping people avoid surgery and treat this syndrome.

Treatment #4: Strength Training The primary focus here is to selectively strengthen **the inner portion of the quadriceps muscle.** Remember, this syndrome is partially **caused by a weak vastus medialis** (in layman's terms, the muscle on the inner part of your thigh). Strengthening this muscle can help. Some examples of exercises that strengthen the quadriceps are: leg extensions, leg curls, leg presses and mini wall squats (this is a type of "partial squat" that puts less pressure on the knee joint). In addition, here at Physical Therapy Specialists, we also do eccentric leg work, eccentric extensions as well as stationary bicycling. In other words, **low resistance** but **high RPM** exercises.

Stretching is also very helpful in treating this condition. Since a tight IT band contributes to this condition, anything that releases the pressure caused by this tight IT band helps. In addition to stretching, we also perform **soft tissue work** and **mild fascia relief** techniques. These techniques loosen up the IT band and soft tissues around the knee. And, as always: stretches like these should only be performed under the supervision of a physical therapist.

Treatment #5: Bracing - Bracing techniques and centering devices serve to keep the patella centered and in its proper place. Taping can also serve to stabilize the patella and keep it centered. Both of these techniques help improve the "recruitment" of the quadriceps muscle and stretches out some of the muscles and soft tissues that have tightened up. Plus, bracing and taping helps unload the patella, which helps relieve some of the compressive forces.

The good news is that most treatments take about six to eight weeks to correct. Not too bad, considering into the years to develop this disorder!

Yes, Patello-Femoral Syndrome is the most common problem associated with the knee joint. If you are experiencing pain around your knees, make sure you get it properly diagnosed. Do not put it off - call me and I'll be happy to set a time for a consultation. You can email me at: mycorept@yahoo.com or call (714) 528-9400.

-- Robert Inglis, MPT, CSCS

Ask-An-Expert:

Your Questions And Answers

Thanks to all our readers for your input and questions! Here's this month's question of the month!

Question: My son was injured recently playing **basketball**. Is there anything I can do to prevent this in the future?

A: Yes. Whether your son plays competitively or for recreation, basketball presents the body with unique challenges and rigors that can cause injury. It's important to get your body in good shape before hitting those hardwood floors. Basketball injuries can be separated into two general categories: **overuse** injuries and **traumatic** injuries.

Overuse Injuries

Overuse injuries are caused by stressing an area repeatedly until it is damaged and begins to hurt. Overuse injuries are generally the result of **poor mechanics** and **imbalances** in muscle strength and flexibility. The tendon, muscle, or joint surface becomes overloaded, weak and begins to break down. This creates inflammation and pain. A common overuse injury in basketball is **patellar tendonitis**, or "**jumpers knee**" (see, those knees again!), which is characterized by pain in the tendon below the knee cap.

Traumatic Injuries

Traumatic injuries are caused by a sudden forceful movement. One of the most common in basketball are finger sprains or "jammed finger". The severity of this injury can range from a minor ligament sprain to a broken finger. Splinting may be required to allow the injured finger to heal.

The most common basketball injury is the **ankle sprain**.



Typically, ankle sprains occur when a player lands on another player's foot and the ankle rolls to far outward. When this happens, the ligaments connecting the bones and supporting the ankle are stretched or torn. The ligaments can tear partially or completely. It is important that you do not ignore an ankle sprain. Recurrent sprains are quite common if you do not seek the proper treatment and follow through with specific strengthening exercises. If your muscles and ligaments are not strong enough to prevent re-injury, you might need surgery.

Seven Tips to Prevent Basketball Injuries

Σ **Always** warm up and **stretch**. Studies have shown that muscles are more prone to injury when they are cold. Get the blood flowing to the muscles with activities like jumping jacks, stationary cycling, jogging in place for 5 minutes. Then slowly and gently stretch for 30 seconds to 2 minutes. Follow these other tips to prevent basketball injury:

- Play only your position and know where the other players are on the court in order to reduce the chances of collision.
- Wear basketball shoes that fit **snugly**, offer good **support** and are **non-skid**.
- Protective **knee** and **elbow pads** can prevent abrasions and bruises.
- Use a **mouth guard** to protect teeth and mouth.
- If you wear glasses, use **safety glasses** or glass guards to protect your eyes (like Kareem).
- Do not wear jewelry or chew gum.
- Baskets and boundary lines should not be too close to walls, bleachers, or other structures.

Thanks to Cecilia C. for this question! Please send your questions to me at mycorept@yahoo.com! I always enjoy reading them and if your question appears in this newsletter, I'll send you a gift certificate worth \$25! Keep the questions coming! -- Robert Inglis

Acidity vs. Alkalinity

The Inside Secrets Of pH Balance In Your Body

(Part One Of a Series) - *Mark Talle L.Ac.*

Acidity and alkalinity are measured according to the pH scale. Water, with a pH of 7.0, is considered **neutral**-neither acid nor alkaline. Any substance with a pH *below* 7.0 is **acid**, while anything with a pH *above* 7.0 is **alkaline**.

The ideal pH range for the human body is between **6.0 and 6.8** (the human body is naturally mildly acidic).

For the body, values pH 6.3 are considered on the **acidic** side. Values above pH 6.8 are on the **alkaline** side.

How Do You Tell What Your Own pH Is?

Simple! Take an **Acid and Alkaline Self-Test**. This test determines whether your body fluids are too acidic or too alkaline. All you do is purchase litmus paper (available at any pharmacy), and apply saliva or urine to the paper. The paper changes color based on the results.

What Is The Problem With Being Acidic?

The reason is simple: You can develop a condition called "acidosis". This is where your body chemistry becomes **overly acidic**.

Symptoms of acidosis include frequent sighing, insomnia, water retention, recessed eyes, arthritis, migraine headaches, abnormally low blood pressure, strong perspiration, dry hard stools, foul-smelling stools accompanied by a burning sensation in the anus, alternating constipation and diarrhea, difficulty swallowing, halitosis, a burning sensation in the mouth and /or under the tongue, sensitivity of the teeth to vinegar and acidic fruits, and bumps on the tongue or the roof of the mouth.

Two Types Of Acidosis

There are two types of acidosis: **Respiratory** acidosis and **Metabolic** acidosis.

Let's talk about *Respiratory* acidosis first. Respiratory acidosis is caused by an **interrup-**



tion of the acid control of the body, resulting in an overabundance of acidic fluids or the depletion of alkali (base).

This occurs if the **lungs are unable to remove carbon dioxide**. Respiratory acidosis can be a result of asthma, bronchitis, or obstruction of the airway. It can be either mild or severe.

On the other hand, *Metabolic* acidosis occurs when chemical **changes in the body disturb the body's acid-base balance**, creating an excessive amount of acid in body fluids. Diabetes mellitus, kidney failure, the use of large amounts of aspirin, and metabolic disease can deplete the body's alkaline base.

Other factors can include liver and adrenal disorders, stomach ulcers, improper diet, malnutrition, obesity, ketosis,

anger, stress, fear, anorexia, toxemia, fever, and the consumption of excessive amounts of niacin and vitamin C.

Improving Acidity

The following nutrients can improve acidity.

- **Tri-Salts** for acid-alkaline balance.
- **Buffer pH+** helps reduce the acidity in the body to normal.
- **Coenzyme A** supports the

immune system's detoxification of many dangerous substances.

- **Kelp** reduces acid in the body.
- **Multi-Zyme** contains HCL (beneficial if you have too little stomach acid).
- **Oxy-Caps** increase stamina and vitality, nourish the body's cells with added oxygen and reduce high acid content in the body.
- **Phosphorus** helps convert food to energy.
- **Potassium** increases metabolism acids in balancing

the pH in the blood.

- **Vitamin A** helps to protect mucous membranes.
- **Vitamin B complex** helps digestion.

Even some herbs, such as elder bark, hops, and willow can be beneficial for acidosis. Also, you can apply ginger compresses to the kidney area externally.

Next month, we'll talk about recommendations, acid-forming foods you need to avoid...and more!

-- Mark Talle L.Ac.

Health Trivia - Test Your Health And Fitness Knowledge!

QUESTION #1:

How far do most dentists recommend a toothbrush be kept from the toilet to avoid airborne particles resulting from the flush?

- ___ a.) 1 foot
- ___ b.) 3 feet
- ___ c.) 6 feet
- ___ d.) You should keep your toothbrush in a separate room.

QUESTION #2:

What percentage of your taste buds do you lose by age 60?

- ___ a.) 20%
- ___ b.) 50%
- ___ c.) 70%
- ___ d.) 90%

QUESTION #3:

Your body contains enough carbon to produce...

- ___ a.) 10 pencils
- ___ b.) 50 pencils
- ___ c.) 120 pencils
- ___ d.) 900 pencils

QUESTION #4:

How many gallons of water does the average human body contain?

- ___ a.) 1 gallon
- ___ b.) 3 gallons
- ___ c.) 10 gallons
- ___ d.) 23.5 gallons

QUESTION #5:

The air released from a sneeze can exceed...

- ___ a.) 15 miles per hour
- ___ b.) 32 miles per hour
- ___ c.) 72 miles per hour
- ___ d.) 100 miles per hour

Answers:

d (5) c (4) b (3) a (2) c (1)



From Our Healthy Kitchen: Mediterranean Chicken Salad W/Artichoke Hearts

This is a salad that's so hearty and satisfying, it can be even be served for dinner! With lots of **low-density** carbohydrates, tons of fiber and low in fat, this recipe will feed a family of four. Try this recipe - I guarantee your whole family will love it!

Ingredients

- 16 ounces chicken tenderloin, coarsely chopped
- 12 small artichoke hearts, chopped
- 2 cups asparagus, chopped into 1-inch pieces
- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 3 cups red pepper, chopped
- 1.5 cups celery, chopped
- 1 cup chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
- 2 cups tomatoes, chopped
- 6 cups romaine lettuce, torn
- 4 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 4 tablespoons fresh basil, chopped
- 4 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 4 tablespoons capers, chopped
- 4 teaspoons minced garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 6 teaspoons olive oil

Directions

- 1.) In a medium non-stick saute pan, **saute chicken pieces** in olive oil.
- 2.) Put **4 tablespoons olive oil**, capers, garlic, vinegar and herbs and spices in a small bowl. Blend together to form the salad dressing.
- 3.) In a medium bowl, mix artichokes, asparagus, onion, pepper, celery and chicken.
- 4.) In a salad bowl, mix the romaine lettuce, chickpeas and tomato. Pour dressing (from step #2) over salad and toss. When on individual serving plates, top with chicken mixture and **enjoy!**

Monthly Announcements and Upcoming Events

New Tai Chi Classes Starting This Month!

Due to the overwhelming demand and success of our first **T'ai Chi** classes, we've scheduled a new series of classes! If you haven't read about T'ai Chi in our last few issues, **here is why you should consider enrolling in these classes:**

T'ai Chi is a slow motion, moving, meditative exercise for relaxation, health and balance. Originally from China, T'ai Chi is now practiced regularly by millions of people throughout the United States and the rest of the world. Specific slow moving forms are taught by **Mark Talle**, L.Ac., a licensed acupuncturist and certified T'ai Chi instructor. It is a one-hour, 8 week course held

one day per week at 7 pm. Each week, the progression is advanced, until a series of movements are learned. The quality of movement is critical, including shifting of the weight, trunk rotation and taking steps. Benefits include enhanced circulation, development of strength and improved balance and flexibility. Daily practice is an excellent way to balance modern life with our internal awareness, and allows cleansing of daily stress from our body, mind and spirit. **Call us at 714-528-9400 to enroll!**

Here's what one participant recently said about these Tai Chi classes:

Dear mark,

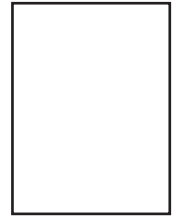
We have thoroughly enjoyed taking your class in Tai-Chi for the past eight weeks. We really like the many benefits

that Tai-Chi provides and especially so as regards to low level of intensity required. The beauty of Tai-Chi as we see it, is that it appears most everyone can do these forms and thereby obtain positive improvement in their well-being. We also appreciate the manner in which the class has been conducted. Your ability to impart instruction and directions on all the moves, in a low key yet thorough manner, has made for a very enjoyable and beneficial experience. We are sorry to see the class end and we are happy to recommend the class to all and we are interested in taking the next class! Thanks again for a truly enlightening and enjoyable experience.

Sincerely,
H. & L. T.

**New Classes Starting
Oct. 11th at 7 pm! Call for
details: 714-528-9400**

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Referral Reward Program

I'd like to thank those of you who have participated in the **Patient Referral Program!** Marketing for new clients costs us tons of time, money and energy. Like any company, we need new patients to stay in business. Over the years we have found that looking for new patients takes away from the time we would rather be spending *with you and for you* and treating other patients!

If I've already helped you with physical therapy, nutrition advice, metabolic testing, etc., then you know how well I serve my patients. When you refer your friends and relatives to us, everybody benefits. We can serve you better. We send you a nice gift. And we assure that we'll take the very best care of any friends or family that you refer

our way! For more information about our referral reward program, just give us a call at: **714-528-9400**. It's a great program where, as our way of saying "thanks", we send you a token of our appreciation for recommending our services!

Also: If you would like any of your friends, coworkers, relatives, business acquaintances, etc. to receive a FREE subscription to this newsletter, please call me at the same number: 714-528-9400. We'll also send them a note with their first issue telling them that you suggested they receive this newsletter, and to contact us if they would like it to stop at any time. *If you enjoy this newsletter, share it with people you know, with no hassle for you!*