Managing My Knee (Patellofemoral) Pain

What is Patellofemoral Pain?

Patellofemoral pain is the pain around or behind your knee cap. This is very common and affects both males and females of all activity levels. Pain can be experienced with simple day to day activities such as walking, sitting, squatting and running.

What Might Cause my Knee Pain?

A rapid increase in physical activity levels and poor movement patterns are thought to be the most contributing factors to your knee pain. Ultimately your knee can no longer cope with this poor movement patterning at an increased frequency and presents with pain.

What Do you Mean by Poor Movement Patterning?

It is thought that your knee cap moves more towards the outside of your knee and this stops effective tracking from the groove in which the knee cap sits. This can be caused because of trauma, systemic disease, post-surgery and muscular weakness.

Rehabilitation programmes to increase your muscular strength, body's awareness and your movement patterning have been found to be very helpful to help people with their knee pain.

What Will a Rehabilitation Programme Address?

If muscular weakness is driving your knee pain, a rehabilitation programme can be used to rebuild strength and this focus tends to be mainly around your hip and thigh. Your therapist may also look at your foot positioning because this can sometimes help improve movement patterning.

Your therapist may suggest a reduction or change in your physical activity prior to starting exercise. These exercises can start in lying and sitting (where the knee's load is reduced) and be progressed to standing and single leg. It is really important to focus on your form and technique during this rehabilitation programme to help minimise further irritation of your knee. Once your pain has improved, you will be able to progress your exercises and you slowly return to your activities as normal. It is important to slowly increase your physical activity to minimise your chance of a flare up and to allow your body to adapt.