

essential



physio

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Four Surprising Reasons Why Your Pain Is Not Improving

ESSENTIAL PHYSIOTHERAPY

Most tissues in the body have healed completely in six to 12 weeks following an injury, however, many people have severe pain that lasts much longer than this. We know that the intensity of the pain you feel is not always associated with a similar amount of damage. In some cases, there can be a severe amount of pain with almost no detectable damage. With this in mind, we explore some reasons why your pain might not be getting better, long after the tissues have healed.

You're afraid of the pain.

Pain can mean many different things, for some of us pain can affect our ability to work or can be a symptom of a serious disease. What you believe about your pain can either amplify or reduce the symptoms you experience. If you feel that every time you experience pain you are causing more damage, you will naturally pay more attention to this and your nervous system will amplify the signals in an attempt to keep you safe.

If you understand the cause of your pain and know that while there is discomfort, you are not in danger of causing more damage, often the pain will feel less severe. This is one of the benefits of seeing a physiotherapist after your injury as they can help you to understand your pain, giving you more control over your recovery.

You started moving differently after the injury.

Immediately after an injury, it's natural to change the way you move to avoid painful movements. After a while, these changed movement patterns can become maladaptive and actually begin to cause pain and discomfort on their own due to the altered stress patterns placed on your body.

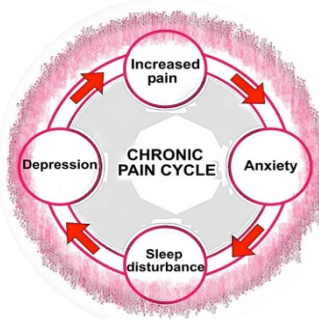
Correcting these adaptive movement patterns can often go a long way in reducing pain after an injury. You might not have noticed these changes and might need a physiotherapist to identify and help you to return to your usual movement pattern.

You have lost muscle strength since the injury.

While a certain amount of rest following an injury is always helpful, if we stop moving altogether, our muscles can lose strength. This can mean that our posture changes, we fatigue easier during our usual activities and that we are more susceptible to further injury. Less movement also means we actually focus on the pain more when it does happen. Physiotherapists are able to advise you on the right types and amounts of exercise for you in the period following your injury.

The pain has affected your lifestyle.

When pain affects your ability to sleep, work and even concentrate, it's not surprising that this can have a negative affect on your overall wellbeing and mental health. This can create a negative cycle of anxiety and depression that perpetuates and increases the experience of pain. If your pain is really getting you down, speaking to a mental health professional can actually be a valuable part of your physical recovery.



Brain Teasers

- 1. Your parents have six sons, including you and each son has one sister. How many people are in the family?*
- 2. I'm not alive but I have five fingers, what am I?*
- 3. People buy me to eat, but never eat me. What am I?*
- 4. I only exist when there is light, but direct light kills me. What am I?*

Did You Know?

Your sense of smell doesn't work while you are sleeping. This is why smoke alarms are so important.

PhysioTip

Ask your physiotherapist what you can do at home to help your recovery

Runner's Knee

(PFJ Syndrome)

What is it?

Our knees are complex hinge joints, designed to provide stability from side to side and smooth movement forwards and back as you walk, kick and run. The patella, or kneecap, is a small bone embedded in the tendon of the quadriceps muscle that protects the knee and also provides extra leverage to the quadriceps, amplifying their strength. The patella moves up and down in a groove at the front of the knee as the knee bends and straightens. Usually this movement is smooth, with little friction, however, if something causes the patella to move in a dysfunctional way, the soft tissue between the kneecap and the knee can become irritated, causing pain in a typical pattern. This condition is often referred to as 'runner's knee', PFJ Syndrome or patellofemoral pain syndrome (PFPS).

What causes it?

The patella usually sits in a balanced position in the shallow groove at the front of the knee and moves easily without friction. The patella is attached to the quadriceps muscle at the top and connected to the lower leg via the patella tendon at the bottom. When the quadriceps contracts, this pulls on the patella and acts

to straighten the knee. If one side of the quadriceps is stronger or tighter than the other, it can cause the kneecap to pull to one side and over time become irritated.

There can be many factors that cause a muscle imbalance or weakness on one side of the quadriceps. In most people, the outer aspect of the quadriceps tends to be stronger and tighter than the inner muscle.

Certain postures and leg positions require the outer muscles to work harder and the inside muscles to become less active. Lack of arch support in your feet or simply a physical abnormality of the knee can also place stress on the movement of the patella.

What are the symptoms?

This condition is characterized by pain felt on the inside or behind of the patella with activities that require repetitive bending of the knee. There may be a sensation of crepitus, clicking or grinding and some people report that their knee suddenly gives way. The pain is commonly felt when running, going up and down stairs or when doing squats and is relieved with rest. The pain may start as a small niggle and gradually become worse over time.

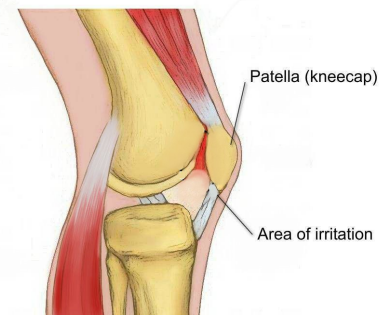
How can physiotherapy help?

The first step in effective treatment is to exclude any other conditions and have a physiotherapist confirm the diagnosis. Your physiotherapist is able to determine

which factors are contributing to this condition, which could include poor posture, a lack of arch support in your feet or poor running technique.

Once these factors have been identified, you will be provided with a specific treatment program to best approach your condition. PFP syndrome usually responds quite well to biomechanical analysis and correction of any muscular weakness and imbalance. Having the correct shoes and orthotics can also make a huge difference. There are some short-term treatments, such as patella taping, try needling, trigger point therapy and ultrasound, which may help alleviate symptoms quickly and keep you active while you address the other factors contributing to your pain.

None of the information in this newsletter is a replacement for proper medical advice. Always see a medical professional for advice on your individual injury.



Answers: 1. Nine. 2. A glove 3. A plate 4. A shadow

Mushroom & Lentil Veggie Burgers

1 cup Green or Brown Lentils
1 ½ cups Water
2 Tbsp. Olive Oil
300g Fresh Mushrooms
1 cup of Sweet Potato
4 cloves of Garlic, minced
1 cup of Rocket
2 Tbsp. Soy Sauce
2 Tbsp. Plain Flour
½ tsp. Smoked Paprika
Salt and Pepper



1. Boil water in a medium saucepan and add lentils. Simmer while covered for 30 minutes or until soft. Remove from heat and strain excess water away. Peel sweet potatoes and chop into small pieces.
2. Coat a large frying pan with 1 Tbsp. of olive oil and cook mushrooms, sweet potato and garlic on medium heat for 6-8 minutes, while stirring frequently. Cook until sweet potato is soft and remove from heat and allow to cool. Blend the sweet potato mixture, paprika, rocket, salt and pepper and soy sauce in a food processor for one minute. Then gently mix these ingredients with the cooked lentils.
3. Shape mixture into four round patties and coat each side lightly with plain flour. Add 1 Tbsp. of Olive Oil to a frying pan, cook patties on medium heat for ten minutes, turning once.

Makes four patties, serve in burgers or with a side salad.



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