

# Patella Dislocation and Physical Therapy - What You Should Know?



Patella (kneecap) is the largest sesamoid bone in our body and it sits above the knee joint. Patella protects the muscles, tendons, and ligaments that form the knee joint and supports various knee movements including bending and straightening of the knee. Patella also protects the knee joint from the daily impacts that the knee experiences.

Sometimes, certain activities or traumatic injuries result in the dislocation of the patella. In severe cases, it breaks. This is a painful condition that makes it difficult for the person to move. As far as the treatment of a fracture is concerned, surgery may be required to realign the broken bone fragments. While on the other hand, a dislocation may be fixed with non-surgical

methods along with physical therapy. In this post, we will see how physical therapy helps with patellar dislocation.

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### **What Are the Types of Patellar Dislocations?**

Depending on the severity of the cause, patellar dislocations could be of two types:

Dislocation

Subluxation

### **Patellar Dislocation**

A dislocation is when the patella completely moves out of its true anatomical position. This could be because of a traumatic event or overuse of the joint. Such cases require immediate medical attention.

### **Patellar Subluxation**

A subluxation is a condition in which the patella does slip out of its position but is somewhat in contact with its true anatomical position. Sometimes, this condition is also called partial dislocation.

### **What Could Cause Patellar Dislocation?**

Multiple causes of patellar dislocation are there and the severity of the condition varies based on the cause. Athletes are more prone to patellar dislocations, and this could occur when the knee gets twisted in an awkward

position. Besides this, the kneecap also gets dislocated because of a forceful blow to the knee. As a result, the patella moves out of its original position.

Above all, another cause of patellar dislocation is weak or tight muscles around the knee joint.

### **How Physical Therapy Helps with the Treatment of Patellar Dislocations?**

When a kneecap dislocation is suspected, the healthcare service provider will suggest RICE therapy. This involves rest, ice, compression, and elevation. This therapy not only helps improve pain but also controls swelling and inflammation in the knee joint. After this, the orthopedic specialist will also check the position of the patella. If required, the healthcare service provider will realign the kneecap and recommend using crutches or walkers.

A period examination of the condition is important to take quick action whenever required. As the healing takes place, the physiotherapist will monitor the condition and suggest exercises to strengthen the joint & soft tissues. Not only this but the physiotherapist will also guide you on how to use crutches effectively.

Remember, an initial evaluation of the knee is required before starting the physical therapy and this is what the physiotherapist will do.

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