

WESTGATE ORTHOPAEDIC PHYSICAL THERAPY & EXERCISE INC., P.S.



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KNEE PAIN?

Not for runners only. Your knees are put under a lot of stress, whether you're running, playing basketball, dancing, or simply cleaning your house. Just using the stairs can put pressure on each knee equal to four times your body weight. Because of its complexity and the great forces to which it is routinely subjected, the knee is susceptible to a host of injuries. Of all the chronic knee injuries caused by overuse, runner's knee—more accurately called patellofemoral pain syndrome (PFPS)—is the most common.

Cause: PFPS typically occurs when a misaligned knee cap (patella) irritates the connective tissue supporting the knee.

Symptoms: Characterized by dull pain in or around the kneecap, it is most noticeable when you go down stairs, run, or squat.

Who's at risk: Research suggests a variety of underlying factors that can contribute to PFPS, including: biomechanical problems such as a kneecap sitting too high or tilted in the groove in which it rests on the thighbone (femur); knees that turn in too much; feet that are very flat or very highly arched; and various muscle-related issues. Women are at greater risk for PFPS than men for anatomical reasons; women have a wider pelvis, which increases the angle of the quadriceps to the knee. They also have smaller knees with less restraining tissue and weaker supporting muscles.

Prevention: Avoid deep lunges or full squats; downhill running; cycling with the seat too low or in too high a gear; stair-climbing machines; and full leg extensions with heavy weights and locked knees. Don't exercise in worn-out shoes, don't wear high-heels; avoid running on very soft, hard, or hilly ter-

TREATMENT

If you have knee pain for more than a week or two, see your doctor. If you have PFPS, you should be referred to a physical therapist.

Taping. One rehab technique for correcting a kneecap that doesn't track properly is called McConnell taping, in which special tape is used to realign the kneecap.

Braces. There are special knee braces or sleeves that are supposed to correct knee biomechanics. The compression also stimulates skin and muscle receptors, thereby improving proprioception.

Bottom line: If you have PFPS, it's crucial to determine what's causing it and get a personalized treatment plan. A skilled physical therapist can then develop an exercise program to address your specific muscle weaknesses or imbalances and/or biomechanical problems. Not everyone with PFPS has weak quads, hamstrings, or hip muscles, for example. If it's a biomechanical issue in your feet, you may need special shoe inserts. In rare cases, if nothing else helps, surgery may be an option.

Cornbread, Apricot, and Cranberry Dressing

Makes 12 servings

½ cup + 2 Tbsp yellow cornmeal
½ cup + 1 Tbsp all-purpose flour
3 scallions, thinly sliced
2 Tbsp finely chopped fresh dill
1 Tbsp sugar
1/2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp baking soda
1/4 tsp salt
3 egg whites
1/2 cup fat-free milk
2 Tbsp canola oil
1 cup apple juice
1/2 cup chopped dried apricots
1/4 cup dried cranberries
1 cinnamon stick
4 slices stale whole-wheat bread,
cut into cubes.

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F; spray an 8-inch baking dish with nonstick spray. To prepare the cornbread, in a medium bowl, combine the cornmeal, flour, scallions, dill, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. In another medium bowl, combine 2 of the egg whites, the milk, and the oil; pour over the cornmeal mixture. With a wooden spoon, beat 30 seconds. Spoon the batter into the baking dish. Bake until the edges are golden and toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, 12-15 minutes. Cool in the pan 10 minutes; remove from pan and cool completely on rack.
2. In a small saucepan, combine the apple juice, apricots, cranberries, and cinnamon stick; bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until the liquid is reduced by half, 5-10 minutes; discard the cinnamon stick.
3. Preheat oven to 325°F; spray 2-quart casserole with nonstick spray. Crumble the cornbread into a large bowl; add the juice mixture, the remaining egg white and the bread cubes; mix until just combined. Transfer to the casserole. Bake until golden, 40-50 minutes.

Weight Watchers® 2006 New Complete Cookbook