

## Meniscal (Cartilage) Tear Exercises

You may do the first 5 exercises right away. You may do the rest of the exercises when the pain in your knee has decreased.

- **Passive knee extension:** Do this exercise if you are unable to extend your knee fully. While lying on your back, place a rolled-up towel under the heel of your injured leg so the heel is about 6 inches off the ground. Relax your leg muscles and let gravity slowly straighten your knee. Try to hold this position for 2 minutes. Repeat 3 times. You may feel some discomfort while doing this exercise. Do the exercise several times a day.

This exercise can also be done while sitting in a chair with your heel on another chair or stool.

- **Heel slide:** Sit on a firm surface with your legs straight in front of you. Slowly slide the heel of the foot on your injured side toward your buttock by pulling your knee toward your chest as you slide the heel. Return to the starting position. Do 2 sets of 15.
- **Standing calf stretch:** Stand facing a wall with your hands on the wall at about eye level. Keep your injured leg back with your heel on the floor. Keep the other leg forward with the knee bent. Turn your back foot slightly inward (as if you were pigeon-toed). Slowly lean into the wall until you feel a stretch in the back of your calf. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Return to the starting position. Repeat 3 times. Do this exercise several times each day.
- **Hamstring stretch on wall:** Lie on your back with your buttocks close to a doorway. Stretch your uninjured leg straight out in front of you on the floor through the doorway. Raise your injured leg and rest it against the wall next to the door frame. Keep your leg as straight as possible. You should feel a stretch in the back of your thigh. Hold this position for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.
- **Straight leg raise:** Lie on your back with your legs straight out in front of you. Bend the knee on your uninjured side and place the foot flat on the floor. Tighten the thigh muscle on your injured side and lift your leg about 8 inches off the floor. Keep your leg straight and your thigh muscle tight. Slowly lower your leg back down to the floor. Do 2 sets of 15.
- **Wall squat with a ball:** Stand with your back, shoulders, and head against a wall. Look straight ahead. Keep your shoulders relaxed and your feet 3 feet from the wall and shoulder's width apart. Place a soccer or basketball-sized ball behind your back. Keeping your back against the wall, slowly squat down to a 45-degree angle. Your thighs will not yet be parallel to the floor. Hold this position for 10 seconds and then slowly slide back up the wall. Repeat 10 times. Build up to 2 sets of 15.
- **Step-up:** Stand with the foot of your injured leg on a support 3 to 5 inches high (like a small step or block of wood). Keep your other foot flat on the floor. Shift your weight onto the injured leg on the support. Straighten your injured leg as the other leg comes off the floor. Return to the starting position by bending your injured leg and slowly lowering your uninjured leg back to the floor. Do 2 sets of 15.
- **Knee stabilization:** Wrap a piece of elastic tubing around the ankle of your uninjured leg. Tie a knot in the other end of the tubing and close it in a door at about ankle height.

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- Stand facing the door on the leg without tubing and bend your knee slightly, keeping your thigh muscles tight. Stay in this position while you move the leg with the tubing straight back behind you. Do 2 sets of 15.
- Turn 90 degrees so the leg without tubing is closest to the door. Move the leg with tubing away from your body. Do 2 sets of 15.
- Turn 90 degrees again so your back is to the door. Move the leg with tubing straight out in front of you. Do 2 sets of 15.
- Turn your body 90 degrees again so the leg with tubing is closest to the door. Move the leg with tubing across your body. Do 2 sets of 15.

Hold onto a chair if you need help balancing. This exercise can be made more challenging by standing on a firm pillow or foam mat while you move the leg with tubing.

- **Resisted terminal knee extension:** Make a loop with a piece of elastic tubing by tying a knot in both ends. Close the knot in a door at knee height. Step into the loop with your injured leg so the tubing is around the back of your knee. Lift the other foot off the ground and hold onto a chair for balance, if needed. Bend the knee with tubing about 45 degrees. Slowly straighten your leg, keeping your thigh muscle tight as you do this. Repeat 15 times. Do 2 sets of 15. If you need an easier way to do this, stand on both legs for better support while you do the exercise.

# Meniscal (Cartilage) Tear Rehabilitation Exercises



Passive knee extension



Heel slide



Standing calf stretch



Hamstring stretch on wall



Straight leg raise



Wall squat with a ball



Step-up



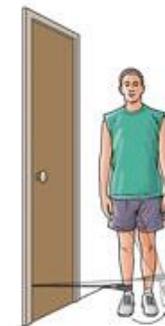
Knee stabilization: A



Knee stabilization: B



Knee stabilization: C



Knee stabilization: D