Runner's Knee

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Definition

Chondromalacia Patella, or "Runner's Knee", occurs when repeated stress on the knee causes inflammation and a gradual softening of the cartilage under the kneecap (patella). This prevents the kneecap from gliding smoothly over the end of the thigh bone (femur), causing pain and swelling of the knee. When the kneecap is pulled sideways, instead of smoothly in its track, it becomes rough like sandpaper and the symptoms appear.

Runner's knee accounts for 25% of the overuse injuries treated in sports clinics.

Patellar shift and damage to articular cartilage

Symptoms

- Pain that increases gradually. Pain may be intensified with activities such as a short run, squatting or jumping.
- Symptoms usually occur beneath or on both sides of the kneecap.
- Stiffness may occur simply from prolonged sitting or descending stairs.

Causes of Injury

- **Over-pronation** causes the lower leg to rotate inward due to the unstable pronated foot. The kneecap moves in an abnormal side-to-side motion instead of gliding within the normal track.
- **Weak quadriceps** may contribute to injury because the thigh muscles normally aid in proper tracking of the kneecap.
- **Muscle imbalance** between the individual muscles of the quadriceps or between the quad group and the hamstrings.
- Direct or repeated **trauma**.
- An **untreated ligament** injury.

- **History** of trauma.
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Treatment

- **Decrease activity**. When recovering, avoid any exercise that puts weight on a bent knee.
- **Rest and ice** if the knee is painful and swollen.
- **Shoe and Foot evaluation and Gait analysis** to determine the proper stability/motion control shoes
- Chiropractic manipulations to **address the misalignment** and muscle imbalance
- **Myofascial Release** (best in the form of ART) to address muscle imbalance
- Neuromuscular **re-education exercises** for the quadriceps, hamstrings and calves.
- **Orthotic devices** to correct abnormal foot mechanics.

To get more information on this article or on Chiro-Health, Inc. and Dr. Mazgaloff, visit **chirohealthsf.com** or call (415) 546-1461.