

# Runners and Walkers: Want to Naturally Reduce Your Knee Pain?

## Try these 6 Tips

### Author's Bio:

I'm Julie Zapata, a dedicated physical therapist with over 23 years of experience. My journey began with a desire to overcome the limitations of the healthcare system and provide exceptional care.

Through **Higher Physical Therapy**, I've created a space where you can achieve best physical health without relying on medication or surgeries.

My goal? To help people stay active and get moving by easing their pain.

With a passion for working with Patients of different age groups, I've developed a unique approach to exercise, manual therapy, and healing.

As I always say, "*Movement is the key to unlocking a life of vitality,*" and together, we'll open that door.

## Want to Naturally Reduce Your Knee Pain? Try these 6 Tips

Do you love to run but find that your knees continually hurt? Don't worry. Most runners, at some time in their running careers, suffer from knee pain. The good news is that knee pain may be alleviated without surgery or medication in many straightforward methods.

Here are six simple strategies for dealing with knee discomfort and continuing to run effectively.

Put on your jogging shoes and go as far as you can!

## Knee Pain: Causes and Risk Factors

Knee pain can be very painful and affect people of all ages and levels of exercise. [Research released in 2011 in the Annals of Internal Medicine](#) found that the number of Americans with knee pain rose by **65%** between 1971 and 2004. They found that the major cause of knee pain is obesity. There are many other things as well that can cause knee pain, such as:

- Injury from overuse
- Mistakes in how to do physical tasks
- Weak muscles around the knee joint which is caused by genes.
- Gout Pain
- Trauma/injury
- Degenerative (Loss-of-function) diseases

You need to know what's causing your knee pain to stop it from getting worse or coming back.

## Tips to Prevent or Reduce Knee Pain

If you're looking for ways to ease knee pain but don't want to go through the trouble of surgery or drugs, here comes your trainer! Today, I will tell you six helpful things you can do to eliminate your knee pain.

### TIP 1: Stretch Your Quadriceps:

When your quad muscles are tight, they can put extra stress on your knees. One of the best ways to keep running and lessen knee pain is to stretch your quads. The quadriceps muscles in the front of your legs are very important for keeping your knees stable and strong when you run.

- Start by standing up straight with your feet about hip-width apart.
- Bend the knee of one leg back and bring the foot toward your hips.
- Hold on to a wall or chair for balance if you need to.
- Pull your foot gently toward your buttocks until you feel a stretch along the front of your thigh.
- Hold this pose for 60 seconds before changing sides.

In addition to stretching, try foam rolling or using a massage ball on the quads to release tightness and improve movement.

Doing these quad stretches regularly can help relieve tightness and imbalances that can lead to knee pain.

## **TIP 2: Remember to Warm Up Before Exercising:**

Runners often overlook warmups, which are very important for avoiding knee pain. Warming up before any workout helps your blood flow and prepares your body for the activity. This makes you less likely to get hurt and puts less pressure on your knees.

- **Start with light fitness movements** like jumping jacks or running in place to get your heart rate up and get more blood to your muscles. This will help your body get used to running and are less likely to hurt or pull a muscle.
- **Next, do active stretches** focusing on running-related areas like the legs, hamstrings, and hip flexors. These stretches not only make you more flexible, but they also work the muscles you need for running correctly.
- **Rolling out tight spots in your legs and hips** using a foam roller can release tension and improve mobility. Pay special attention to areas around the knees to alleviate any tightness contributing to knee pain.

Incorporate some specific exercises that mimic running movements. Lunges, squats, and leg swings are great options for warming up the muscles used during running while promoting stability and balance.

*Remember, investing time in your warmup routine is an investment in preventing knee pain down the line. So don't skip this vital step – it's worth every second!*

## **TIP 3: Strengthen Your Calves:**

Strong calves are essential for runners, as they provide stability and support to the knees. When your calves are weak, it puts extra strain on your knees, leading to pain and discomfort. So, if you want to reduce knee pain and keep running strong, it's time to give some love and attention to those calf muscles!

1. **Calf Raises:** Stand with your feet hip-width apart and slowly rise onto the balls of your feet. Hold for a few seconds at the top before lowering back down. Repeat this movement for several sets.
2. **Hill training:** Running uphill forces your calf muscles to work harder, helping them become stronger over time.

In addition to specific exercises, make sure you're stretching your calf muscles regularly. Stretching helps improve flexibility and prevents tightness that can contribute to knee pain. Having strong calves helps you run faster and farther while relieving stress on your kneecaps and tendons. Simple **heel lifts and toe walking** will help you stay on the road or trails even if your knees hurt.

#### **TIP 4: Adjust Your Running Routine:**

Running is a fantastic way to stay active and maintain your fitness levels, but if you're experiencing knee pain, it may be time to reassess your running routine. Making a few simple adjustments can make all the difference in reducing knee pain and allowing you to continue enjoying this exhilarating activity.

1. **Reduce your mileage:** While you allow your pain to subside, sometimes lowering your weekly mileage can be enough to speed up the recovery process.
2. **Change your running workout:** if you maintain the same pace throughout your runs, consider performing tempo runs or "**Run/Walk**" routines. This adjustment will reduce knee irritation and help with recovery.
3. **Switch up your running surface.** If you're constantly pounding the pavement or hitting hard trails, it could be causing unnecessary stress on your knees. Try running on grass or dirt roads to give your feet a break from the hard ground.
4. **Adjust how long you run, and dont push past sharp pain:.** Running too much can put too much stress on your knees, which can cause pain and soreness. Find the right mix to have enough time to heal between workouts.

Also, wear the right shoes if you want to run without knee pain. Make sure you have shoes that are made for running and have enough padding and support.

## TIP 5: Mobilize Your Hips:

When your hips are tight or stiff, they can put extra stress on the knees, which can hurt and be uncomfortable. Even runners can get aches and pains from hips that are too tight. Try these exercises to mobilize your hip joint:

1. **Dynamic stretching activities.** These moves help make the hip joint more flexible and give it a wider range of motion. Incorporating exercises like **hip circles, leg swings, and lunges** into your warm-up routine can significantly reduce knee pain during your runs.
2. **Foam rolling.** Using a foam roller on the hip muscles can release tension and improve blood flow to the area. This not only helps alleviate knee pain but also enhances overall performance.
3. **Strength training exercises.** These exercises that target the glutes and core muscles can further support proper hip functioning while running. Exercises like **squats, bridges, and clamshells** can help strengthen these areas and promote better alignment during movement.

Taking care of our hips goes beyond just reducing knee pain; it contributes to injury prevention and improved running performance. So don't neglect this vital aspect of your training regimen!

## TIP 6: Analyze Your Run With a Movement Expert:

While many of these suggestions may help some individuals, everyone's injury experience is unique. When it comes to running, sometimes we need a fresh pair of eyes to scrutinize our form and identify any issues contributing to knee pain. That's where a movement expert can come in handy.

Knee pain and injuries come in a variety of forms. Seeking a correct, comprehensive running examination to discover the TRUE cause of your discomfort and injury may help ensure a full recovery and return to what you love.

**A movement expert, such as a physical therapist or sports medicine specialist,** is trained to assess your running mechanics and identify any imbalances or weaknesses that could be causing knee pain. They will observe your gait, foot strike pattern, hip alignment, and overall body posture during the running motion. They can provide personalized recommendations on exercises, stretches, or modifications to help reduce knee pain.

## Takeaway Message

Reducing knee pain and continuing your running routine doesn't have to involve surgery or relying on painkillers. By implementing these simple tips, you can take control of your knee health and enjoy the benefits of running for years to come. So lace up those sneakers, hit the trails, and let nothing hold you back from achieving new fitness and personal growth milestones!

***Remember: prevention is always better than cure when it comes to maintaining long-term joint health!***

## Health Disclaimer:

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Higher PT's commitment to providing exceptional care is reflected in the expertise of its therapists and their dedication to your well-being. Our company's goal is to reduce pain, address symptoms, identify root causes, and enhance overall physical health. Contact us for any professional guidance or therapy!

***At Higher Physical Therapy, we don't just treat symptoms; we empower you to embrace life without limitations.***

Julie Zapata, at HIGHER PHYSICAL THERAPY

