



KNEE PAIN

WHEN TO MAKE A MOVE

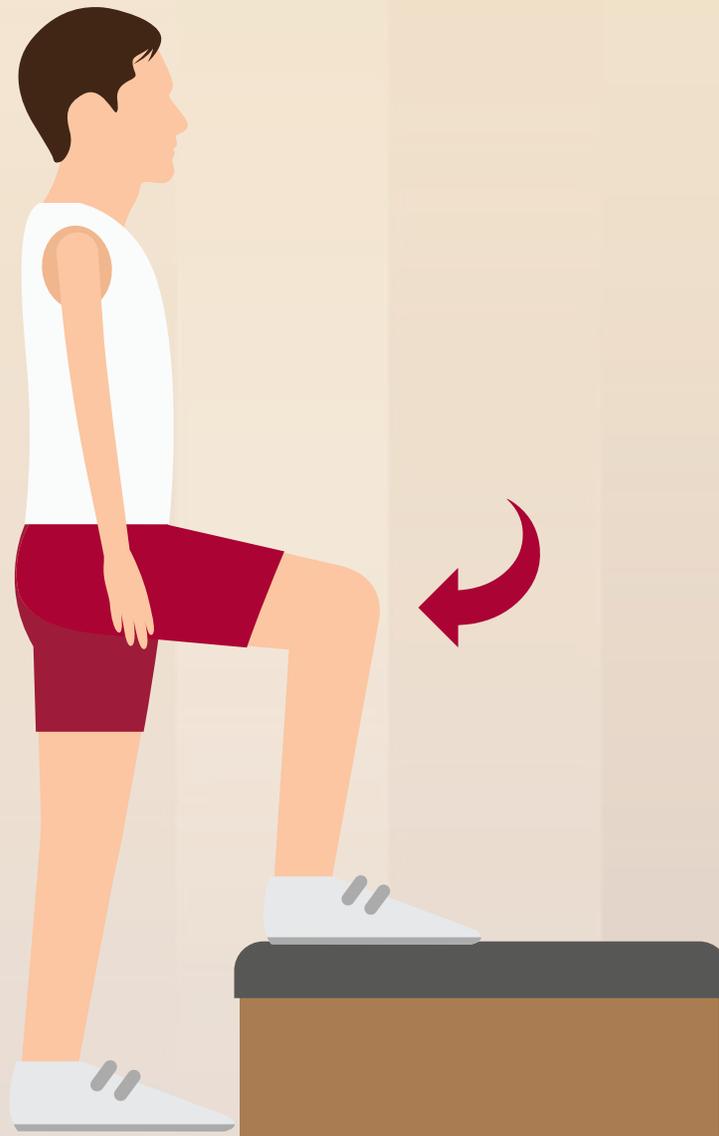


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It's the largest joint in your body. It's also one of the most injury-prone. Research shows that over **half** of the people on the planet will experience some type of issue with this part of their body at some point in their lives, and that these problems can happen to anyone - regardless of age, sex, race, or ethnic background!

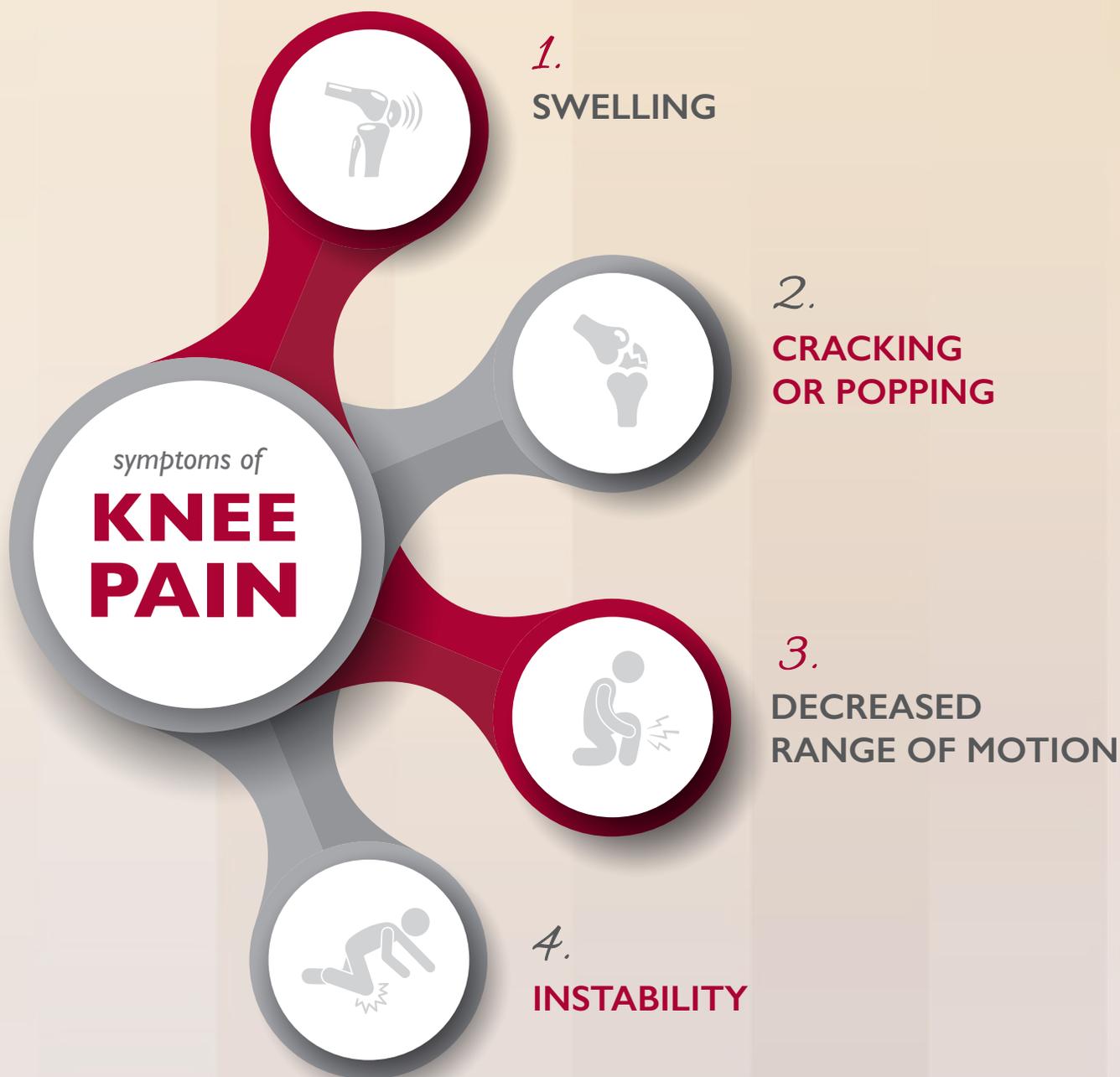
Any guesses which part of the body this is?



IT'S YOUR KNEE!

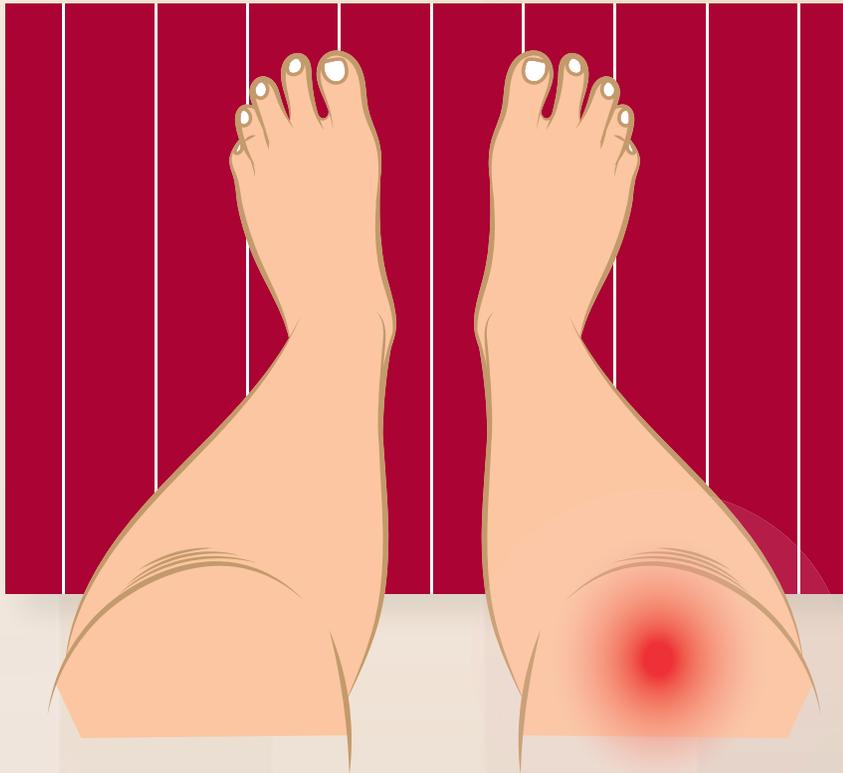
Due to the high likelihood of experiencing some kind of knee problem within your lifetime, it is important to know what to do if you begin to experience different types of pain. The trouble with knee pain is that many people believe their pain experiences are minor, and avoid visiting a doctor...**but what if it's serious?**

Take a look at some symptoms that you may experience related to knee pain so that you can be clear on when to get a doctor involved.



First on the list: **swelling**.

Looking down at your knee, do you see or feel a small balloon-like, fluid-filled lump? Is the skin surrounding the kneecap elevated? These could be signs of trauma in the knee or, even in some cases, a symptom of an underlying condition.



You don't want to ignore this!

If the swelling has lasted for over **48 hours**, it is important to call an orthopedic physician. They will need to take a sample of the swelling site to determine next steps. Remember - if you experience a fever in addition to the swelling, it is in your best interest to go directly to the emergency room.

Next up: **a cracking or popping sound.**

When engaging in everyday movement and activities, have you ever noticed a distinct cracking or popping sound coming from your knee? While it may sound like something awful, do not fear, **UNLESS** you are experiencing other symptoms with this sound.



Sometimes this sound can simply come from joints and ligaments that have become uneven over time, when they glide past and over one another.

The main concern that comes from this sound is when accompanied by swelling. If you are experiencing the two together, it is important to contact an orthopedic physician to make sure a meniscus tear, osteoarthritis, or a cartilage injury aren't in your future.

Are you experiencing **decreased range of motion**?

Do you find it difficult to move your entire leg in full swing? Do you feel **limited** in terms of movement in that leg? Here are some important things to remember if you are. First, if you already struggle with complications like gout or arthritis, this is likely to occur. If you've had knee surgery recently, yes, this is also likely to happen. *Remember that pain is the body's way to shield an injury from worsening.* Swelling causes limited range of motion as well because the rising of the skin makes for less space to move.



Problems to worry about with decreased range of motion include injured, sprained, torn, or ruptured ligaments in the knee, or possible damage of the cartilage between the bones of the joint in the knee. That being said, it is always smart to check with an orthopedic professional to ensure that your decreased range of motion isn't a result of an underlying cause.

Now, let's talk about **instability**.

Instability is the term used to describe the twisting and sensational feelings that you may experience while carrying out everyday activities. Some refer to this as “buckling” and many times is the result of injury in one of the four major ligaments in the knee. So, what does treatment for instability look like? There are a number of options when it comes to knee instability, but it all depends on how severe the injury is.



The majority of the time, if it's just a partially torn ligament, treatment options include medication, physical therapy, or wearing a knee brace. In more severe cases, commonly found with athletes or those that are physically active, knee instability can mean more serious fractures or even an ACL tear. In this case, surgery is typically recommended.

Now that you know what to watch for, let's take a look at some of the factors that can **increase** risk for your knee.



#1

KNEE INJURY

This one is pretty obvious, but let's elaborate. When you injure your knee, it is a common fact that you are likely to experience more problems with it down the road. When you are treated for a knee injury of any kind, a full recovery is absolutely vital. It is extremely important to allow yourself the proper time to heal before carrying out physically strenuous activities again.



#2

EXTRA WEIGHT

No, there is not a specific number that you should be seeing when you look at the scale in efforts to avoid knee pain, but it is important to maintain a healthy weight. The more excess weight you carry, the more weight that is being placed on your knees. If you already have knee problems to begin with, such as knee osteoarthritis, gaining extra weight could make the pain much worse, and result in further issues. Injury risk can be reduced by normal physical activity and healthy eating.



#3

RIGOROUS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

While it is important to stay in shape and be physically active, never overwork yourself! Certain physical activities can do more harm to your knee than good. Did you know that extensive running on the treadmill can shake up the ligaments in your knees, sometimes causing direct injury. Engaging in certain sports can put you at higher risk, as well, such as jumping in basketball or even the consistent movement when swinging a golf club. This doesn't mean avoid sports or physical activity by any means, but make sure to try and prevent an injury at all costs by stretching beforehand.



#4

AGE

This is an unavoidable factor. As you get older, certain parts of the body just aren't able to shield themselves like they used to. Research shows that after the age of 65, you are **35%** more likely to experience problems with your knees. That is why many people begin to develop arthritis as they age. What can you do to prevent aging? Unfortunately, aging is inevitable...BUT there are ways to tone down the effects of aging. Some of the things you can do to "age-proof" your knees are building muscle, increasing your range of motion, and maintaining a healthy weight.



#5

GENETICS

Yet another risk factor we can't control. The struggle is that some people are simply born with certain genes that make them more likely to develop knee problems. Although genetics being a risk factor is typically uncommon, one of the major conditions with a genetic trace is rheumatoid arthritis. This is an autoimmune disorder that causes the deterioration of joints through swelling, pain, and stiffness. When this condition affects a younger adult, it is likely that it has something to do with genetics.



As you can tell, there are risk factors that you can control, and others that you cannot. Seeing an orthopedic physician for any one of these symptoms might seem intimidating. But, every pain and every symptom is unique! That is why it is important to have your knees checked out when you notice that something isn't feeling right. As Dr. Byrne says,

“

It is always better to get more information to make sure you do not have a serious condition that could cause lasting pain or permanent injury.

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