

Monthly  
Wellness  
SpotLight  
by PSA



IN GOOD HEALTH

**EXERCISE WITH NEEDY KNEES**

The knee is the largest joint in the body, and it is also very prone to injury and pain. While it may be tempting to avoid exercise when knee pain occurs, certain types of exercise can help alleviate existing knee pain and prevent future pain or injury by providing the knee with extra support. Exercise may be the most effective way to treat osteoarthritis without surgery. It is best to warm up with light exercise before starting any knee strengthening exercises to increase blood flow to the muscles and allow them to be more flexible. The below exercises can help build healthier, stronger knees. If a person experiences pain during these exercises, they should stop doing them and speak to a doctor. Anyone with severe knee pain should consult a doctor before trying to exercise.

**Leg Lifts**

Lie down on the floor with the back flat. Do not let the back arch during the exercise. Keep one leg straight and the other bent with the foot on the floor. Slowly lift the straight leg toward the ceiling without bending the knee. Hold for 5 seconds. Slowly lower the leg back down to the floor. Do not put it down too quickly or let it drop. People who have osteoporosis or a back-compression fracture should not perform this exercise.

**Standing Hamstring Curls**

Stand straight with the knees 1-2 inches apart. Hold on to a stable chair for balance. Slowly bend one knee behind the body, lifting the heel off the floor while keeping the thighs aligned until the knee is bent 90-degrees. Keep the straight leg slightly bent and keep the raised foot in a neutral, flat position. Hold the bent leg up for 5 seconds and then slowly lower it to the floor.

**Step exercises**

Use a large, sturdy stool or exercise platform no taller than 6 inches. Step up onto the stool with one foot and allow the other foot to follow and hang behind. Do not allow any part of the stepping foot to hang off the stool or platform. Keep the body weight on the first foot and hold for up to 5 seconds. Slowly lower the hanging foot down

and then follow it with the other foot. Do not lock the knees during this exercise. People who have issues with balance should not perform this exercise.

**Chair Dips**

Use two high-backed, stable chairs, placing one on either side of the body. Place a hand on the back of each chair for balance. Bend both legs at the knee, being careful not to let the knees extend past the toes. Extend the right leg out in front of the body and hold it a few inches off the floor for 5 seconds. Focus on keeping the weight balanced on the left foot. Slowly lower the right leg completely to the floor and stand up straight on both feet. Do not bring the leg up more than 45 degrees off the floor. Keep the back and upper body straight.

**Wall Squats**

Stand with the head, shoulders, back, and hips flat against a wall. Step both feet out about 24 inches away from the wall, while keeping the back and shoulders against it. Keep the feet no more than hip width apart. Slide the back down the wall slowly until the body is just above a normal sitting position. Hold for 5 seconds and then slide back up. Do not squat too low. The knees should not go over the toes. Do not use fast, jerky movements. Perform the exercise slowly and smoothly.

[Click here](#) for more detailed steps regarding how to complete each exercise. After exercising any muscle group, it is essential to stretch the muscles to improve flexibility and reduce pain and injury. Quadricep stretches, toe touches, and standing hamstring stretches are good for the knees. Exercise is a noninvasive and healthful way to prevent injury, keep the legs strong, and help with minor knee pain due to overuse, arthritis, or other causes. People who have health conditions should speak with a doctor before beginning any exercise program.