

## **PATELLOFEMORAL DYSFUNCTION**

**DO YOUR KNEES CRACKLE AND CRUNCH WHEN YOU SQUAT DOWN?**

**ARE THEY PAINFUL WHEN YOU ARE RUNNING?**

**DO YOU HAVE PAIN CLIMBING UP AND DOWN STAIRS**

**DO YOUR KNEES HURT WHEN YOU STAND UP AFTER WATCHING A MOVIE**

If you answered “**yes**” to these questions there is a good chance you are suffering from patellofemoral dysfunction. This occurs when your kneecap does not track smoothly through its groove at the front of the thighbone (femur). This produces uneven wear behind the kneecap and quite often inflammation and pain results. The maltracking may be a result of weak thigh or buttock muscles, tight muscles and tendons on the outside of your leg, poor foot posture/flat feet, wear and tear/arthritis or a combination of any of these factors. The problem occurs over a large age range from children to middle age and often occurs due to a change in activity levels.

Pain that often seems unshakeable – that you may have put down to age (or with children, growing pains), can often be improved markedly and even eradicated with careful assessment and treatment by your Physiotherapist.

Your Physiotherapist is able to assess the position of the kneecap with different movements and various positions of the knee. This, along with assessments of muscle strength, muscle length and foot posture, enables the therapist to determine the most effective form of treatment for you.

Treatment consists of measure to settle pain and help to realign the kneecap as it runs up and down at the front of the knee. This is done mainly through exercise and stretching. Strapping tape is used to help hold the kneecap in position while a person perfects their exercise regime and regains the required strength. Arch supports (orthotics) are occasionally used to correct the position of the feet to ensure good alignment of the lower limbs. The entire process is essentially pain free and you may not require any time away from your normal sport-exercise program.

In what may be as little as two weeks, you’ll be back to make an unlikely late change toward a spot in the Australian team for the Sydney Olympics!

## **WHEN DO YOU SEE SOMEONE FOR HELP?**

Your Practitioner will be able to provide an accurate diagnosis and an appropriate management plan. Often this problem can require a Sports Medicine Doctor, Physiotherapist, and/or Podiatrist to assist.