

KNEE INJURIES (V)

JUMPERS KNEE

By Dr. Boyd Williams

Jumper's Knee is a condition which results in chronic inflammation of the patellar tendon at the knee. Athletes which are most prone to this condition are those involved in quick starting and stopping sports, especially where a lot of jumping is required, hence the name.

Sports like basketball and volleyball have the highest incidence of this condition. The repetitive stress on the knee tendon caused by frequent running and jumping leads to irritation and later, inflammation and pain. The athlete will complain of achiness around the patella (knee cap) and possibly a feeling of "giving way". Tenderness to pressure will be felt in the tendon at the bottom of the patella and sometimes, on the top.

The severity of the condition can be determined by the athlete's ability to play. Early changes and inflammation result only in pain after activity. Moderated changes cause some pain during and pain after activity. Advanced problems cause constant pain and discomfort with restriction in the athlete's performance.

Treatment for Jumper's Knee includes ice massage over the areas of tenderness after activity. A period of rest from sports may be necessary if the condition is advanced. Stretching the quadriceps and hamstrings before and after activity relieves tension at the knee. Some cases may require sports therapy such as transverse friction massage to the knee tendon. After pain subsides, strengthening of the quads and hams with continued stretching and icing will prevent recurrence of this injury.

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