

# KNEE PAIN EXERCISE PROTOCOL

**A Step-by-Step System  
to Rebuild Strength  
Without Triggering  
Flare-Ups**



**REDUCE  
PAIN**



**BUILD  
STRENGTH**



**GET BACK  
TO WHAT  
YOU ENJOY**

**PCS**  
PAIN CARE SUPPLY



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## WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR

If stairs make you hesitate, if standing up from a chair feels like a gamble, or if a bike ride leaves your knee aching for days afterward — this guide is built for you. It is not a general fitness plan. It is a structured, three-phase reload system for people whose knee pain has made ordinary movement feel unpredictable.

## THE PATTERN

Your knee is not broken. It is responding to a pattern — a mismatch between the load you're asking it to handle and its current capacity. Pain is often load versus capacity, not permission to push through, and not a reason to avoid movement altogether. This guide walks you through rebuilding that capacity in the right order, so movement stops feeling like a gamble.

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# DO THIS FIRST

If your knee locked up unloading groceries, or you couldn't stand up smoothly after sitting through a movie, start here — before any exercise below.

1. Stop and assess. Is this sharp, electric, or accompanied by swelling, locking, or giving-way? If so, see the Red Flag note below before continuing.
2. Reduce load immediately. Shift weight off the knee — sit, lean, or support your weight through a rail or countertop.
3. Apply a topical (see The Topical Protocol) and begin gentle, pain-free range of motion — not stretching through pain, just movement within a tolerable range.

**Feel Check:** *If you experience sharp pain, numbness, tingling, or any symptoms listed in the Red Flag Protocol below — stop immediately and consult a healthcare provider.*

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## RED FLAG PROTOCOL

**STOP and seek immediate medical attention if you experience:**

- Loss of bladder or bowel control
- Numbness or tingling in the groin or inner thigh
- Sudden severe weakness in both legs
- Chest pain, dizziness, or difficulty breathing during movement
- Symptoms that are rapidly worsening

**STOP and consult a licensed provider before continuing if you experience:**

- New or increasing numbness or tingling down the leg or into the foot
- Sharp shooting pain that worsens with every attempt at movement
- Significant increase in symptoms after two or more sessions
- Fever, unexplained weight loss, or night pain that wakes you from sleep

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# THE ROADMAP

Three exercises, three phases, in the order your body actually needs them. Skim this page now — you can come back and read each exercise in full detail when you're ready to do it.

|               |                          |                    |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 REDUCE LOAD | 2 REACTIVATE STABILIZERS | 3 RESTORE MOVEMENT |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------|

| PHASE                     | PURPOSE                                                           | EXERCISE (COUNT)          |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Reduce Load            | Lower joint stress while reactivating the surrounding muscle.     | Seated Knee Extension (1) |
| 2. Reactivate Stabilizers | Build controlled strength around the knee before adding movement. | Wall Sit (1)              |
| 3. Restore Movement       | Restore real-world movement and confidence in the knee.           | Low Step-Up (1)           |

*You do not need to memorize this. Skim it now for the shape of the system, then read each exercise in full when you get there.*

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# YOU ARE HERE: REDUCE LOAD

1 REDUCE LOAD

2 REACTIVATE STABILIZERS

3 RESTORE MOVEMENT

1 exercise in this phase. Purpose: reduce load on the joint while reactivating the surrounding muscle.

## YOU ARE HERE: RESTORE MOVEMENT

**PCS**  
PAIN CARE SUPPLY  
MOVE BETTER.  
HURT LESS.  
LIVE MORE.

1 REDUCE LOAD

2 REACTIVATE STABILIZERS

3 RESTORE MOVEMENT

### LOW STEP-UP

RESTORE REAL-WORLD MOVEMENT AND CONFIDENCE IN THE KNEE.

START



FINISH



**TARGET AREA**

- Functional knee strength
- Real-world load

**REPS & HOLD TIME**

8 to 10  
reps  
per side

**PHASE PURPOSE**

Restore  
real-world  
movement and  
confidence in  
the knee.

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*Seated Knee Extension — reduce load, wake up the muscle.*

**How to do it:** Sit tall in a sturdy chair, feet flat. Slowly straighten one leg fully, foot flexed toward you. Hold 2–3 seconds at the top. Lower with control. Finish all reps one side before switching. 10 reps per side, 2 sets.

**Feel Check:** *Light tension in the front of the thigh — not sharp pain in the knee. If it's sharp, stop and check with a provider.*

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# YOU ARE HERE: REACTIVATE STABILIZERS

1 REDUCE LOAD

2 REACTIVATE STABILIZERS

3 RESTORE MOVEMENT

1 exercise in this phase. Purpose: build controlled strength around the knee before adding movement.

## YOU ARE HERE: REACTIVATE STABILIZERS

**PCS**  
PAIN CARE SUPPLY  
MOVE BETTER.  
HURT LESS.  
LIVE MORE.

1 REDUCE LOAD

2 REACTIVATE STABILIZERS

3 RESTORE MOVEMENT

### WALL SIT

BUILD CONTROL. REACTIVATE STABILIZERS.

**START**

**FINISH**  
SHALLOW HOLD

**TARGET AREA**

- Quadriceps
- Knee joint stability

**REPS & HOLD TIME**

10 to 15 second hold  
3 rounds

**PHASE PURPOSE**

Build controlled strength around the knee before adding movement.

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*Wall Sit — build control, reactivate stabilizers.*

**How to do it:** Stand with your back against a wall. Slide down into a shallow hold — not a deep squat. Hold 10–15 seconds. 3 rounds.

***Feel Check:*** *Mild burn in the thighs, controlled breathing throughout. If your knee feels sharp or unstable, come up higher on the wall.*

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# YOU ARE HERE: RESTORE MOVEMENT

1 REDUCE LOAD

2 REACTIVATE STABILIZERS

3 RESTORE MOVEMENT

1 exercise in this phase. Purpose: restore real-world movement and confidence in the knee.

## YOU ARE HERE: REDUCE LOAD

**PCS**  
PAIN CARE SUPPLY  
MOVE BETTER.  
HURT LESS.  
LIVE MORE.

1 REDUCE LOAD

2 REACTIVATE STABILIZERS

3 RESTORE MOVEMENT

### SEATED KNEE EXTENSION

REDUCE LOAD. WAKE UP THE MUSCLE.

START

FINISH



- Quadriceps
- Knee joint support



10 reps per side

2 to 3 second hold

2 sets



Reduce load on the joint while reactivating the surrounding muscle.

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*Low Step-Up — restore real-world movement and confidence in the knee.*

**How to do it:** Using a low step or sturdy curb, step up slowly, control the way down. 8–10 reps per side.

***Feel Check:*** *Controlled effort, no sharp catch at the top of the knee. If symptoms increase after two sessions, drop back to Phase 2 for a few more days.*

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# THREE ENVIRONMENTS

This protocol is built for real life — not a clinic, not a gym floor. Here's how it shows up in your day.

## AT HOME

If getting up from the couch triggers pain: work through the Seated Knee Extension before you plan to be on your feet for a while. Keep the CBD cream nearby for a quick reapply afterward.

## AT WORK

If stairs at the office make you hesitate: the Wall Sit can be done discreetly against a break room wall. Build the habit before stairs become unavoidable.

## IN YOUR VEHICLE

If getting in and out of the car aggravates your knee: a few gentle knee bends before and after a long drive — using the Low Step-Up pattern on a curb if one's nearby — keeps things from stiffening up.

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# THE TOPICAL PROTOCOL

These tools will not fix the problem. But they may help reduce pain and discomfort so you can move better and build tolerance again.

**Step 1.** Morning application — apply topical relief before your day starts.

**Step 2.** Reapply every 2 to 3 hours as needed.

**Step 3.** Combination protocol: menthol first, wait 2–3 minutes, then CBD cream. Menthol drives penetration; CBD penetrates deeper and delivers anti-inflammatory effect.

**Step 4.** Use a patch (e.g. Salonpas) for hands-free, sustained relief through the day.

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# TOOLS THAT SUPPORT THIS PROTOCOL

If your knee tightens up mid-day or after this routine, these are tools people commonly keep nearby:

| TOOL                                               | WHY IT'S HERE                                                                                    | LINK                           |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 3,500mg CBD Pain Relief Cream<br>(primary topical) | Keep this near your desk or nightstand so you're not scrambling during a flare-up.               | <a href="#">Shop CBD Cream</a> |
| Theracane Massager                                 | Useful for reaching tight areas around the knee and thigh that are hard to self-release by hand. | <a href="#">Shop Theracane</a> |

Or browse all tools at [PainCareSupply.com](#) — click Shop Pain Relief Tools in the menu.

*These are affiliate links — if you purchase through these links Pain Care Supply may earn a small commission at no additional cost to you. These are not prescriptions or clinical recommendations. Always consult a licensed provider before use.*

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# RESEARCH REFERENCES

The information presented in this guide is informed by clinical practice guidelines, peer-reviewed research, and evidence-based educational resources available at the time of publication.

- JOSPT Clinical Practice Guidelines — progressive loading for patellofemoral and knee pain. [View source](#)
- Cochrane Reviews — exercise therapy for patellofemoral pain syndrome. [View source](#)
- American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) — load management and graded exposure principles for knee pain rehabilitation. [View source](#)

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# WHERE TO GO NEXT

Start slowly. Stay consistent. Progress from Phase 1 to Phase 3 only once each level feels controlled — not sharp, not strained.

**If pain flares in a different way than what this guide covers, get The Flare-Up Reset free at [paincaresupply.com/free](https://paincaresupply.com/free)**

Thank you for trusting Pain Care Supply.

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