



Keeping Bodies
in Motion

PAINFUL KNEECAP

by John H. Pak, M.D.

Runners who suffer from chondromalacia (also known as patello-femoral syndrome) may experience burning behind the kneecap, pain while stair-climbing, stiffness after periods of inactivity, and/or painful pop-



ping of the knee. These symptoms arise from a softening of the joint surface between the kneecap and the end of the femur. It can be caused by tight hamstrings, hip flexors, iliotibial bands, or a misaligned kneecap which tilts or pulls to the outside of the knee.

Worn-out running shoes, insufficient arch support or sudden increases in running mileage or intensity may also contribute to the problem.

With this in mind, it may help to switch to new running shoes at least every 500 miles. In addition, the quadriceps, hip flexors, and iliotibial bands should be stretched regularly to increase the flexibility of the knee. Many orthopaedists recommend that people with chondromalacia perform low-impact exercises such as swimming in addition to stretching, to strengthen muscles.

If you have any further questions about chondromalacia or any other orthopaedic concerns, contact **FRONT RANGE ORTHOPAEDICS** at (719) 473-3332 to schedule an appointment. We are located at 175 S. Union Blvd, Suite 200.

P.S. Regular stretching exercises for the hamstrings, hip flexors, and iliotibial bands help runners minimize the contact between the kneecap and femur.