

# PREVENTING KNEE INJURIES IN THE WORKPLACE

There are two main types of knee injuries:

**Acute injuries**, which result from a sudden trauma, such as an awkward fall, collision or twist of the knee joint, and **overuse injuries**, which result from continuous activity or overload, such as running, jumping and cycling. These types of injuries start gradually and usually relate to a range of factors such as structural or biomechanical problems, training methods, incorrect footwear, incorrect techniques in the workplace and incorrect exercise style.

The tips below are to help you move well, stay well and assist in reducing the risk and severity of knee injuries in the workplace:

## FOOTWEAR

- With every step, shock is absorbed by the feet, knees, hips and spine to decrease the force of impact. Wearing the correct footwear will help to reduce these forces further whilst not affecting the normal function of the foot.
- Wearing the right footwear for the job protects you from stress-related injury to the ankles, knees, hips and spine.

## SURFACES

- Avoid activities on slippery or uneven surfaces and in areas with poor lighting.
- Remove all potential trip hazards before conducting activity in that area

## EXERCISE

- Simple exercise such as walking or swimming is the best.
- Make sure you warm up before and cool down after exercise with gentle stretches.
- Build up your exercise program by gradually increasing the frequency, duration and intensity, but don't work through pain (see your physio if you are experiencing pain).
- Maintain good general fitness and lower body strength and flexibility (especially quadriceps muscles).
- Practise standing on one leg to improve your balance and leg muscle strength.



## WHAT TO DO AFTER A SPRAIN?

**As soon as possible, and for 72 hours after injury, use the RICE method:**

### **Rest**

Take it easy and only move within your limit of pain.

### **Ice**

As soon as possible, and for 20 minutes every two hours, apply ice or a frozen gel pack wrapped in a damp towel. This helps to control bleeding and pain whilst reducing secondary tissue damage.

### **Compression**

Firmly bandage the entire ankle and lower shin. This helps to control swelling.

### **Elevation**

As much as possible, elevate your ankle higher than the level of your heart to reduce swelling.

## HOW CAN PHYSIOTHERAPY HELP?

Your physiotherapist can help you prevent injury occurring. If you do become injured your physiotherapist will examine the injured knee to determine the best course of treatment.

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