

How to Tape & Stop Kneecap Pain (Patellofemoral Pain Syndrome)

Kneecap pain can be caused by trauma but often it is caused by poor positioning of the knee cap. The kneecap is positioned within a groove on the end of your thigh bone. If the kneecap is deviated or tilted to one side it can result in overuse or overload on the part of the thigh bone resulting in pain, discomfort, and irritation.

Kneecap taping can help correct the poor position of the kneecap and help relieve pain symptoms. Taping also allows muscle strengthening exercises to be done.

For the taping to work it is important to understand how the kneecap needs to be moved. The goal is to move the kneecap away from the sore spot as it glides in the groove.

Prior to taping you need to assess your baseline for pain. Perform a half squat and rank your knee pain from 1-10. Squat down to thigh level and see how much pain is caused. After you have applied the tape, you will squat again and hopefully experience some reduction or relief of the pain.

Before applying the tape, glide the kneecap to the outside, then to the inside, then up, and finally down.



Make note of which direction brought on any pain or “crunching” (crepitus). The goal is to move the kneecap away from the painful direction. Most kneecap problems require the kneecap to be moved toward the inside of the knee for relief (pushing the kneecap outward increases pain)

How to apply the tape. Ideally, a healthcare professional should instruct you in the application the first few times.

Equipment needs:

- A. Hypoallergenic (Hypafix) tape to be used directly on the skin.



Amazon Link: <https://amzn.to/3mvTKjV>

- B. 1.5" non-stretch sport tape works well. We use Leukotape.



Amazon Link: <https://amzn.to/2Ynk2fS>

Taping Procedure:

1. Half Squat down to a level where you feel pain in your kneecap and rank your pain from 1-10.



2. Clean the skin on and around the kneecap with gentle soap and water. Then dry the area.
3. After you should apply a layer of Hypafix (hypoallergenic tape) to the skin over the kneecap. In most instances you should also cover the inside of knee to provide some room for the Leukotape to adhere. There should not be any stretching tension to the Hypafix. The Leukotape will go on next. Precut cut three (3-inch strips) of Leukotape and have them ready to use nearby.



4. It is helpful to trace an outline of the kneecap on the Hypafix. This outline will help you reposition the kneecap.



5. Decide which way you need to glide the kneecap for pain relief. Again, for most people you will be gliding the knee toward the inside (or toward the other knee).
6. Place the end of the Leukotape on the outside edge of the kneecap (if gliding the kneecap toward the middle). The Leukotape should apply a little tension to the kneecap and hold it in the new position.



7. Use your two thumbs to GENTLY glide the kneecap toward the middle.

8. Apply some tension to the Leukotape and affix the other end to anchor the kneecap in its new position. The tape should make a straight line from the outside of the knee to the inside. Apply 1-2 more layers of tape until you feel it will maintain support of the kneecap. You should note some wrinkling of the tape once applied.



9. Once it is repositioned, try half squatting again and reassess your pain. Hopefully, your kneecap pain will have reduced. Repeat this process if your pain gets worse or if it does not seem to help.
10. Note that you will not be able to fully bend your taped knee normally while the tape is in place.
11. If the skin over the knee becomes itchy or develops a rash (or any other symptoms), the tape needs to be removed immediately.
12. Otherwise, the tape can remain in place for 48 hours. The tape can be changed sooner if it stretches out and is no longer effective.
13. While the tape is in place it is a good time to perform your strengthening exercises for patellofemoral pain syndrome. See video *Strengthening Exercises to Help Stop Kneecap Pain (Patellofemoral Pain Syndrome)*.
14. If you have pain with normal daily activities the tape can be applied daily until you are pain-free.
15. If you are having kneecap pain only with sport-specific events, apply the tape only when participating in those events.