

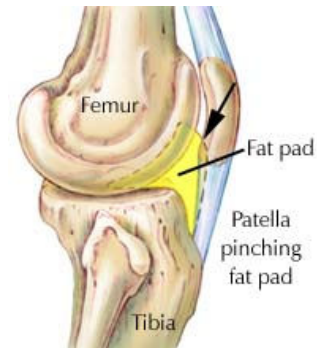
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Fat Pad Impingement/Irritation

What is a Fat Pad?

The fat pad is a small amount of fat located beneath and to the sides of your patellar tendon. In situations where forces are directed at the patella it acts as a shock absorber, thus protecting the underlying structures. It has an abundance of nerve and blood supply causing it to be the most sensitive part of the knee.



What is fat pad impingement/irritation?

Traumatic fat pad impingement usually occurs with a hyperextension injury or in the case of a forceful direct impact to the kneecap; the fat pad can become pinched between the articular surfaces of your thigh bone and the patella. Secondary fat pad impingement is **usually** seen in runners and is caused by a patellofemoral joint dysfunction. This condition is normally chronic and is aggravated by continual extension (straightening) of the knee joint where the fat pad becomes irritated and may become significantly inflamed due to faulty tracking of the patella.

Symptoms

- The pain is often sharp and well localized at the front of the knee or to the sides of the patellar tendon when weight bearing or straightening the knees.
- Tenderness and/or swelling around the bottom and under the kneecap
- The pain can last for several hours or days once provoked.
- Going up steps or squatting will aggravate the symptoms.

Management

Decrease swelling and inflammation

- Rest, Ice and electrotherapeutic modalities
- Bracing or taping the knee by your physiotherapist to unload your fat pad and reduce the irritation and help the tissue heal.
- Patellofemoral joint mobilization
- Non-steroidal Anti-inflammatory medication
- An injection of local steroids by your sports physician may be indicated

Addressing Biomechanical problems

- Pelvic and hip stabilisation/ strengthening program to help control the movement of your femur
- Improve patella tracking by addressing quadriceps muscle function
- Improve foot mechanics with proper footwear and possibly orthotics
- Reduce loading/weight-bearing activities of the knee by cross-training

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