



## Physiotherapy update - are you suffering from debilitating knee pain?



The knee joint absorbs the forces from activity



surprising that knee injuries are common.

Pain in the front of the knee occurs in up to 40 per cent of cases investigated by a clinician. The main risk factor for knee pain is age, as over time gradual wear and tear can lead to osteoarthritis, pain, stiffness and inflammation.

A significant amount of body weight goes

through the knee, for instance walking up and down stairs or a gutter. Therefore, if there is an injury, this can cause pain. Research published in the *Journal of Biomechanics* found a load equivalent to 346 per cent of your body weight goes through your knee when going down stairs. Similarly 316 per cent of body weight when going upstairs and 261 per cent of body weight when walking.

One of the most important modifiable risk factors for the development and progression of knee pain and osteoarthritis is obesity. Weight loss reduces the risk of symptomatic knee arthritis. A weight loss of 1kg results in 4kg

reduction in the load going through the knee joint.

One of the strategies for treating knee osteoarthritis is exercise. Research published in the *British Medical Journal* concludes "exercise is the most effective management strategy for knee osteoarthritis." Researchers found that exercise promotes the circulation of synovial fluid to 'lubricate' the joint. Moreover, exercise can strengthen the muscles, ligaments and tendons surrounding the knee joint.

It also increases the heart rate, which increases the blood circulation carrying oxygen and healing nutrients to the structures of the knee.

There are many different exercises that can be given for knee joint pain, some include walking regularly, the use of an exercise bike, exercises carried out in a pool, strengthening exercises, squats and several others. Clinical experience suggests that a 'recipe approach' does not work, in other words not all types of exercise are suitable

for knee pain. Therefore, a thorough clinical assessment needs to be carried out so the most appropriate exercises can be advised.

If you have knee pain, take the first step and book in with Robert and Jeff by calling 9203 7771 or booking online at [www.ngp.net.au](http://www.ngp.net.au)

See page 2 for more details.

by Robert Vander Kraats and Jeff Wong, Physiotherapists

THE knee joint is the largest joint in the body and is made up of three bones

and the knee cap. The joint plays a fundamental role in mobility, carrying a person's weight and absorbs the forces caused from walking, running and jumping. As such, it is not



## Make the best decision now for you and your family later

WESTERN Australians are being urged to engage with palliative care services soon after diagnosis of incurable illness to ensure they enjoy the life they love, with the people they love, for as long as possible.

Many people believe palliative care is only for the last few weeks of life, however when accessed early, palliative care services can enhance the quality of a person's life through interventions such as symptom management, counselling and support to meet cultural obligations.

"Palliative care is not only for the elderly, it is for people of any age who have been diagnosed with a progressive serious illness that cannot be cured," said Dr Alison Parr, Department of Health's clinical lead, Palliative Care.

"Planning ahead empowers people to shape the care provided to them and to live their best life for longer.

"Palliative care includes providing support for the person and their loved ones from a range of health professionals and making and sharing decisions and plans with appropriate people to help ensure that what matters most to the individual remains everyone's priority.

"Palliative care is not just for the end-of-life, it can sometimes span years, for example to manage pain, and in some circumstances, it can even extend a person's life."

The Department of Health has launched a campaign to raise awareness and improve understanding of palliative care in the community, called This is Palliative Care.

Palliative care is for anyone diagnosed with a life-threatening illness that cannot be cured, regardless of age. This involves consultation

with health professionals to help optimise quality of life, prioritising what is important and sharing plans with family.

West Australians are encouraged to:

1. Learn about palliative care and end-of-life decision making, visit [HealthyWA.wa.gov.au/palliativecare](http://HealthyWA.wa.gov.au/palliativecare) or call the Palliative Care WA

Helpline on 1800 573 299.

2. Think about what matters most to you and how palliative care could help improve quality of life for you or someone you care about.

3. Talk to family, carers, friends and health professionals about palliative care and the type of care you might want now and into

the future.

4. Write down information about your preferences and decisions and
5. Share your information, decisions and plans with relevant family members, carers, friends and health professionals

The World Health Organization (WHO) describes palliative care as: "an approach that

improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial, and spiritual."



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