

WEAK KNEES make them stronger safely

Stretch slowly, and never do any exercise that causes pain.

Strong knees improve quality of life, help you do everyday activities like walking and are really important for sports. For us skiers and snowboarders, building strong knees helps you twist and traverse the terrain with ease.

To get strong knees, you must build up certain muscles to take pressure directly off your weak area. The quadriceps (thighs) and hamstrings (back of legs) are critical muscles for knee strength. Yet, many knee pain sufferers avoid exercises that build knee strength because of a misconception that they will hurt the knees. Correct form is critical and here are some awesome knee quadriceps and hamstrings strengtheners.

Through all of these exercises, be mindful of not "locking" your knees. Also, be sure to stretch our your hamstrings and quadriceps at the end of your routine. Muscles that are too tight can pull on your knees and cause pain as well. ♦



Straight Leg Lift

Start by lying on your back with your right leg bent. Keep your left leg completely extended straight out. Slowly raise your left leg to about a forty-five degree angle, keeping the leg locked straight. Hold for five seconds and then slowly lower to the flat, resting position. It is not necessary to take the leg straight up to ninety degrees, as the most difficult range of motion is the first two feet off the ground. Repeat twenty times. Switch to the right leg.



Knee stretch

Start with your left leg slightly bent as shown, and with your right leg crossed over the other. Grab the left leg at the back of the thigh and pull toward the chest until the left leg is straight up, but no farther. Hold for five seconds, then return to starting position. Switch legs and repeat. Do ten repetitions with each leg. Discontinue if the exercise causes more pain to your sore knee.



Double Knee to Chest

Start on your back with your legs outstretched. Bring both knees up together and place your hands below the knee area on the top of the shin. An alternative place for your hands is the back of the thighs. Slowly bring your knees toward your chest, hold for ten seconds, then go back to starting position.



Knee Full Extension

Start by sitting in a chair that is high enough so that the knee can bend to a ninety degree angle. Slowly raise the leg until it is horizontal. Hold for five seconds, and slowly let it return to the ground. Repeat with other leg. Do twenty repetitions, if able.



Hamstring stretch

Sit on the floor with your right leg outstretched and your left leg bent as shown. With both hands extended, reach out toward your toes of the right foot. Don't bounce, just stretch slowly. Try to hold the stretch for ten seconds, then go back to the starting position. Do ten repetitions before switching legs.