

3 KEYS to PAIN-FREE KNEES

Many people experience knee pain, and while there can be lots of different reasons, a few key things can really make the difference between suffering and thriving.

HI! I'M SUSAN

I am a dedicated personal trainer and coach with extensive experience working with older adults who face movement challenges. I provide tailored fitness programs that enhance stability and strength to help my clients maintain an active, independent, and adventurous lifestyle.



KEY #1 THE HIPS

The hips do a lot of work to support the knee, especially in walking, so we want to make sure the muscle in the hip area are functioning properly. For that we want to do 3 things: stretch the hip flexors (and the quadriceps) and strengthen the hip abductors and extensors.

SEATED HIP AND KNEE STRETCH



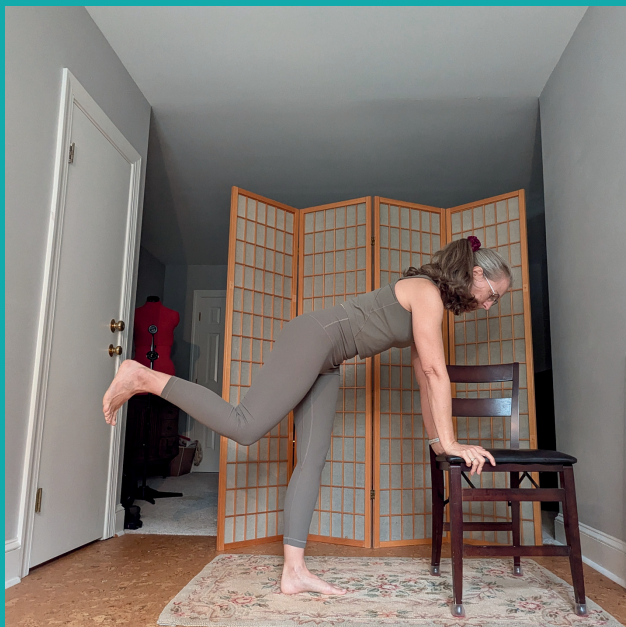
Sit sideways on a chair so that you can have one leg over the front of the seat. Push the leg back as far as you like. Try not to let your back sway. Sit up tall. Hold on to the back of the chair for safety.

HIP ABDUCTION



Stand next to a chair or countertop for stability. Send one leg out to the side and lift it up and away. Keep the knee and toes pointed to the front. Stay tall, not canted over to the side as you lift the leg. Perform 10-15 repetitions on each side.

HIP EXTENSION



Place your hands on a chair or countertop so that you are partially bent over. Send one leg out the back and lift your foot so your knee is bent about 90 degrees. Pulse the leg up towards the ceiling. Repeat 10-15 times feeling the glute muscle (in your butt) engage.

KEY #2 THE FEET

The feet are what you walk on(!), so we want to make sure they are functioning properly, too. For that we want to do 2 things: mobilize the ankle and lift the arch.

ANKLE CIRCLES

Stand on one foot (hold on for stability) and reach the other foot slightly in front of you. Make big, slow circles with the foot as if drawing circles in the air with your big toe. Do 8-10 in one direction then 8-10 in the other direction. Repeat with the other leg/foot.

ARCH LIFT



Stand with one foot slightly in front of the other. Lift the arch by drawing the ball of your big toe toward your heel. It will seem as if your foot is actually getting shorter. Hold for 5 seconds and release. Repeat 5-6 times. Repeat with the other foot.

KEY #3 WEIGHT BEARING

You might notice that your knees hurt particularly as you land with each heel strike of each step. There are a couple things you can do to reduce the stress the knee is having to endure.

WALK LIKE A MODEL

Instead of walking “normally” with your heel hitting the ground first, try reaching your toe forward and landing on the forefoot first. You will take slightly shorter steps. Or you can try walking a bit “flat footed,” so that your whole foot lands at once. You may find yourself doing this naturally as a way to walk “tenderly” as one of my clients told me.

GET SUPPORT

Use a cane or a walker. This can be temporary! When your knees are particularly painful, just give them a helping hand, literally, by using your arms to bear some of your weight through the cane or walker. A little rest can really help.

EAT LIKE A MODEL?

OK, don't starve yourself! That is seriously, the LAST thing I would tell you. (Oops, this IS the last thing I'm telling you, sort of...) Well, obviously, the more weight your knees have to bear, the more stress they endure. If you have some extra weight on your body, shedding that could really help.

BONUS: WHAT YOU MIGHT BE DOING WRONG

Often we're told we need to strengthen the quadriceps in order to support the knee. This is true but the way you're doing it might be aggravating the knee. Instead of doing leg extensions (where you bend and straighten the leg at the knee), try isometric holds instead.

ISOMETRIC HOLD #1



Sit and straighten one leg out in front of you and hold in there for 10 seconds. Relax it down. Repeat twice more. Repeat with the other leg.

ISOMETRIC HOLD #2 “WALL SIT”



stand with your back on the wall and your feet about a foot or a little more out away from the wall. Slide yourself down the wall as if to sit in a chair. Hold for 10-30 seconds. Build up to being able to do :45 seconds or even 1 full minute!

I really hope this booklet was helpful. I want you to be able to enjoy your life, not reel it in due to pain. There's so much more to do, though, so let's get on it! Message me on Facebook, or email me at spryfitnessnc@gmail.com!

