

Is Pilates effective in management of knee pain

Knee pain and knee injuries are one of the most common orthopedic complaints. Whether resulting from an acute injury, or overuse due to poor biomechanics or muscle imbalance, Pilates for knee pain is a good rehabilitation option.



Although Pilates is often thought of as a core-based exercise regime, Pilates is a whole mind and body practice which can be modified to target specific muscles. Knee alignment relies on a strong core, quadriceps, and gluteus muscles. Pilates provides a low impact, controlled environment to isolate these muscle groups in order to improve strength and awareness. It can also be progressed to involve whole body movements, using the entire kinetic chain, reflecting function.

These days, Pilates is generally divided into either a mat-based class, or into an equipment class. The typical exercises taught in both, stem from the classic exercises developed by Joseph Pilates. Using equipment, such as the reformer and chair, allow the resistance to be altered and adapted. This provides a good opportunity to work on limb alignment and stability through the kinetic chain.

Despite the type or cause of knee injury sustained, it is common to lose glute and quad strength as your body attempts to protect the injured painful area around the knee. Therefore, knee rehabilitation for any type of injury, focuses on some degree of glute and quad activation and strength.

Pilates equipment also provides the opportunity to work muscles in different planes and positions against gravity, which ensures better function and possibly better muscle recruitment.

After an acute injury, it may be necessary to have a time of unloading the knee to allow any inflammation to settle. This is a prime time to start on core and glute strengthening. As time goes on, and the injured knee can tolerate more load, the exercises can be progressed to more weight bearing through the knee, and the focus may shift to quad strengthening and knee alignment. The Pilates equipment uses springs, which can be adapted to be either be assistive or resistive to the exercise being performed, making Pilates an ideal form of exercise during rehabilitation.

Incorporating Pilates into rehabilitation will benefit anyone suffering from knee pain or a knee injury, anything from insidious anterior knee pain to post-total knee replacement surgery. At In Balance Physio & Pilates, we offer Pilates classes with individualized programs to reach specific goals. So whether you are looking to prevent injuries and maintain balance, or are recovering from a specific knee injury, we can provide you with a Pilates program to help.

Article by Megan Dunphy