

# ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL HEALTHSOURCE

## Runner's Knee

You think you're doing a great thing for your body by taking up running, and you are. However, now that you're logging in about 40 miles a week, you may find that you are rewarded for your efforts by excruciating pain around and sometimes behind the kneecap. This is chondromalacia of the patella, or more commonly runner's knee. This condition often afflicts runners when they approach that magic 40-mile a week mark. Even after taking off for a few days, the pain seems to come right back, sometimes even intensifying after running a few miles. The pain often feels worse when running downhill or walking down steps. Stiffness often occurs after sitting for long periods. There may even be a crunching or clicking sound when you bend or extend your knee.

Runner's knee is actually not your knee's fault; the blame belongs to your feet and thighs. Your knee moves up and down in a narrow little groove in your thighbone. When your legs and feet are working properly, your knee moves smoothly and comfortably in that groove.

If you have relatively weak thigh muscles and improper foot support, your kneecap may move out of that track, or rub up against its sides. That's when trouble in the form of pain develops—runner's knee.

Simple overuse can further aggravate runner's knee. If you've steeply increased your mileage recently, try scaling back a bit. In addition, back off from a new hill or speed. Banked surfaces or a curved track can also bring on runner's knee. Try running on a level surface as much as possible.

You can treat runner's knee with a bit of patience. Relieve the pain by icing your knees immediately after running. Wrap a cold pack around each knee for about 15 minutes to bring down the swelling, and take an anti-inflammatory like ibuprofen or aspirin after running. Before going to bed, put heating pads or warm wet towels on your knees for half an hour.

Make sure you're wearing proper, supportive shoes, and finally, don't give up. Exercise provides many great benefits.



**Scott T. Glaeser, MD**

Sheboygan Orthopaedic Associates  
Medical Arts—Superior Avenue  
2920 Superior Avenue  
Sheboygan, WI 53081  
920/458-3791



## St. Nicholas Hospital

3100 Superior Avenue  
Sheboygan, WI 53081  
920/459-8300

[www.stnicholashospital.org](http://www.stnicholashospital.org)

*An Affiliate of Hospital Sisters Health System*

In Partnership With

**PHYSICIANS'**  
**HEALTH NETWORK**