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## PAIN WITH ACTIVITY: WHEN SHOULD YOU STOP?

Last week a patient came into the clinic complaining of persistent knee pain that she'd been experiencing over the past 6 to 8 months when working out or running. It began as just soreness in her knee, but for the past couple months has caused increased pain and swelling, preventing her from running further than 5 miles or doing squats and lunges at the gym. This patient also went on to explain that she does 3 to 4 marathons a year and is training for another coming up in a month, but the pain is getting worse. So the question arose, how do you know if the pain is something you should just work through versus being a sign that something more serious is going on? Are you potentially making it worse by continuing the activity?



If the patient had come to us early enough we probably would have recommended that she stop running or performing the painful activity after about a month of persistent pain, or even sooner if the pain and/or swelling was increasing. The only pain that you can (note: we said can, not should) work through is muscle soreness. The old saying "No pain, no gain" pertains to muscle soreness and fatigue, but NOT joint pain, especially if the pain is sharp or causes you to stop an activity. Muscle soreness pain is usually a dull, constant muscle ache that can last 2-3 days following a workout or performing strenuous activities. Muscle soreness is also mostly in the muscle belly and not in the joints. Pain in your joints during an activity typically indicates some type of dysfunction or inflammation in the joint and can require decreased or elimination of some activities in order to heal.

#### When you experience pain with any activity you need to ask yourself the following questions:

1. Is the painful joint still painful after I complete the activity?
2. Is there swelling or bruising around the affected area?
3. Does the pain shoot away from the affected area?
4. Does the pain stop me from performing the activity?
5. Has the pain lasted for more than 3 weeks?
6. Is the pain getting worse?

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## CONTINUED... | Pain with Activity: When Should You Stop?

If you answered yes to any of those questions then it is likely you are experiencing pain that may require an assessment from a physiotherapist. Pushing through it will likely not work. It is far too common where a patient will come to see us and the pain has been going on for longer than 3 to 4 months and been getting worse. If you choose to try to work through the pain you could be causing more damage and end up costing yourself a longer recovery, if not surgery. If we catch it early enough it could be something as simple as an imbalance in muscle strength or flexibility, footwear, improper activity techniques, or not giving yourself the proper recovery time following an activity. These are simple things that could get you back to performing your activity within weeks! So please take our advice and stop by to see us if you are having any abnormal aches or pains in your joints. It is better to spend an hour in our office to make sure you are not creating a bigger problem than it needs to be. You'll be happy you did!

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#### REFER

If you know someone suffering from aches and pains, send them to Elite Sports Injury. They will appreciate it and so will we!