Why Your Right Knee Hurts After Golf (And How to Fix It) Transcript

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Introduction to Trail Knee Pain

If your trail knee hurts after golf, don't click away just yet. Let's walk through this one together. I know how frustrating that can be because one small pain or annoyance can make you wonder if the game that you love is starting to slip away.

And if your right knee has been bothering you on the golf course, you are in the right place. See what I did there? Okay, quick question. Before we go any further, where exactly does your knee hurt?

Is it on inside? is it in front of your knees? Deep inside like you can't get to it? Keep that in mind because we're going to come back to that later.

Now let's address the elephant in a room. Everybody talks about the lead knee. That's the one that's in slow motion. The one in the finish, that gets all of the attention.

But the trail knee, it's doing at least half the work. It bends, loads, stabilizes, and then it has to deal with the rotation. And here's Your knee is designed to be great at bending and straightening.

It is absolutely terrible at twisting. So when your trail knee hurts, that tells me that something is being overloaded. And in this video, I'm going to break down the most common causes of right knee pain in golfers.

I am going explain what's happening inside the knee in plain English for you. i will also show you where that pain may be coming from.

Why the Trail Knee Matters

Finally, i'll give you some simple things that you can try at home or right before your round to help try to nip that knee paint in the butt. Are you ready?

Does sound good? Okay, let's get into it. Why does the trail knee matter? In right-handed golfers, your right knee is the trial knee. It bends in the backswing, it holds you up, It loads your weight, and then it deals with the twisting when you rotate.

And I said before, the knee loves bending and straightening, but it hates to be a twisting machine. it is not chubby checker. So when it hurts, something inside is getting overloaded.

and golf exposes that super fast. The knee, being the drama queen that it, tends to let you know about it. So let's talk about what's inside your knee.

There are three key players that drive knee pain. The first one we like to talk, about is the meniscus. Right in here, in between these two bones, the Menisus is a shock absorber between, these 2 bones.

When you twist on a bent knee, that Meniskus can get pinched and start to hurt. Number 2 culprit is, The ligaments. These are the ropes that keep things stable.

You have one here and you have 1 These stop wobbling and side to side stress. These keep your knees from popping out of place. Number three culprit is cartilage.

This is the smooth lining for gliding of bones. this is that white shiny end of the chicken bone that you all know about. If it wears down over time, which it's going to do, it is going lead to stiffness.

Now don't forget this because this also comes in for later. Weak hips and thighs, the knees will pay the price. So when we talk about trail knee pain, what we're really asking is this question.

Knee Anatomy and Pain Locations

What part of your whole system is getting overloaded? So let me make this immediately useful to you. Where your knee hurts actually tells us a lot. If you have pain on the inner part your of knee, this is the part that's on your inner side of body, that tells me that your medial meniscus or your media collateral ligaments could be at risk and that comes from a twisting stress or a twisted injury.

If it's the outside of your knee, the outer portion of the leg, that could be your lateral meniscus or it could your IT band or even your collateral ligament.

Now sometimes these come from just the compressive force. If the pain is in the front of you knee we have to worry about your knecap and the kneecap tracking.

Bending and straightening overload can cause difficulty with alignment of knee and can also cause knee pain. If the pain is deep inside, like you can't quite find it, but you know it's there, then you have to think about cartilage or meniscus wear.

So instead of just saying, my knee hurts after golf, what should I do? Try asking yourself, where exactly does it hurt? That one shift alone puts you ahead of most golfers in my office.

So let's talk about the swing and what golf is doing. Golf is not a nice, smooth turn. It's actually pretty violent. it's a mix of bending and loading, rotating and shifting weight.

And the trail knee gets caught up in all of that. These are the biggest injuries and the big things that I see. If you're twisting on a planted foot, which means that if your foot stays stuck firmly in the ground where your body rotates around, your knee becomes a corkscrew and your meniscus hates that, number two, swing fall.

is the knee caves inward. If the need collapses inwards during your downswing, that can stress the inside portion of your knee and it can lead to damage of you medial collateral ligament.

It can also strain the median meniscus and the other supporting structures. Error number three that we see is you swing harder than your body is ready for.

A lot of golfers out there think that more speed equals better golf and more power, but sometimes it just means more knee pain and inflammation. Number four problem I see is weak hips.

You know Shakira said your hips don't lie, right? So if your hip aren't controlling the movement, your knee has to. And once the knee becomes a backup employee for your whole lower body, it's usually going to start complaining about all the overtime.

And this is where most golfers miss it. The most common causes of trail knee pain.

Golf Swing Stress and Common Injuries

So let's go through the main ones at least. Number one, meniscus irritation. This is the big one. Remember the menescus right in here? The menuscus gets unhappy when the knee is bent and it's twisted at the same time.

And guess what golf loves to do? Yeah, it's exactly that. What does meniscus pain feel like? It feels like a sharp pain on the inside or the outside of the knee.

Remember medial meniskus, lateral menskus? You'll have pain when you're turning. You may feel pain while you are squatting. Sometimes patients will complain to me that they have a clicking or catching sometimes.

A lot of golfers will sometimes also describe it as a grab deep inside the joint. So if your knee feels it is catching or pinching or it getting stuck for just a second, your meniska may be involved.

Injury number two is the inner knee strain or the MCL. If your trail knee keeps collapsing inwards, the interstructures of the knee can get irritated.

Now that may feel like aching on the inside of your knee or soreness after a round. Sometimes you may have some pain with twisting. This is common in golfers who feel that their trail knees dive in towards the middle of their body or cave in during their sling.

Number three is if you have pain on the front of the knee, the Kneecap Cartilage may be the issue. Now this can happen when the knees bending and straightening a lot or if the muscles that guide the knecap are not helping enough.

Think about this as like your alignment on your car is off where it's pulling to one side. What does that feel like though? That feels like pain specifically on the front of the knee.

You may complain of pain going up and down stairs. You may have pain when you try to stand up from a chair. Sometimes you may also notice that you have a grinding or a rough feeling behind the new cap like there's sand back there.

That kind of paint can make really simple things feel really annoying. Kind of like stop me if this doesn't sound familiar. Why does getting off the toilet now suddenly feel it's a workout?

The fourth common cause of injury is arthritis or cartilage wear. If the knee has been under stress for a long amount of time, the joint surfaces start to wear down and that can cause a deep ache and stiffness that could cause swelling after golf.

That also causes pain that sticks around longer than you want it to. Now, if this sounds familiar, your knee may not be angry about one particular swing, but it could be anger at you about the last several years of golf.

So this is really important. Why are golfers ignoring the trail knee? Well, because it's sneaky. Because the trial knee is not the flashy one.

Most Common Causes of Trail Knee Pain

It's not that star of the swing. it doesn't get all the glamour shots, But it does get a lot of work. And because the pain often starts off something small, golf first tend to kind of brush it off.

They will tell me things like, yeah, I didn't think about it. It's just a little sore. Or they'll say, oh, you probably just slept on it wrong. No big deal.

Oh, You know what? I just need to stretch. My favorite one is, it'll be fine after I warm up. Then the next round comes along. And guess what, the knee is still unhappy.

The thing about knees is this, they aren't your ex from college. they rarely wake up one day and decide to be dramatic for no reason. There your spouse, They have probably been sending you a warning sign for years that you've been missing or ignoring.

Okay, so let's test your knees right now. First one we're gonna do is called the trail knee twist test. Can you say that three times fast? Stand next to a chair or countertop for balance.

What you're going to do, is you going put your weight on your right leg, and you gonna have a nice, soft bend in your knee. Now from there, you're going to gently rotate your body left and right just a little bit.

Don't force it. Now ask yourself, did that bring on pain? Now if it did, is the pain on the inside? Is it on outside? is it in the front, in back, deep inside.

Does it feel sharp? Does is feel pinchy? does it feels like it's gonna catch? If a small twist on a bent knee bothers your trail knee, that may point to meniscus irritation or stress on side structures of your knee.

Now here's another quick test. This is a mini squat. Try this one in front of a mirror so you can see yourself. Stand with your knees about, or with, your feet about hip-width apart.

What you're going to do is you are going do a minisquat, like you trying to sit into a chair. Watch what your right knee does. Does it stay lined up or does it start to cave inwards?

If the right kne collapses inward, that tells us that the hip and thigh muscles may not be controlling the leg well. And if the knee is not controlled well, the golf game will find that weakness faster than you would like.

So let's talk about some simple exercises for the trail knee. These are things that you can do at home or on the course right before your round. They give the trial knee better support or they train the need to have better.

Support so that it's not doing all the work itself. The first exercise is that test that we just did. It's the mini squat. You're going to do two sets of 10 repetitions each.

Stand with your feet, shoulder width apart, keep your chest up, Keep your knees nice and soft. And now just do a little bend like you're trying to sit back into a chair.

Now come back up. you don't need to go really deep. This is not a deepest squat contest. What we're doing here is we are just teaching the knee to load and unload in a controlled way.

What this helps is build basic leg strength and help the knee track better. Think small, smooth and controlled. We are training the need. we are not trying to impress anybody at the gym and you're probably doing this at home.

So maybe you are just trying impress your wife. I don't know. Number two, standing hip abduction with a resistance band.

Why Golfers Ignore It and Simple Self-Checks

Same thing here. Two sets of 10 repetitions each side. What you going to do is you gonna put a resistant band around your knees, just above your knee.

Stand tall and hold on to a chair or a golf cart for balance and slowly lift one leg out to the side Keep your body upright. Don't start leaning or swinging your leg like you're trying to kick open the saloon door.

What this helps is this, helps strengthen your hip muscles that help stop the knee from collapsing inwards during your swing. Remember strong hips are like good body guards for your knee.

They help keep you out of trouble. Exercise number three is a single leg balance. So you're going to stand on your trail leg for 20 to 30 seconds and you are going keep your knee slightly bent and your body tall.

Do this twice. If that feels really easy, try it with a gentle arm motion or while holding your club across your shoulders. This helps improve your balance and control which matter a lot when you were rotating through your golf swing.

If you can stand on one leg for 32 seconds without looking like a newborn giraffe, you're doing pretty well. Exercise number four is band side steps. This is again, two sets of 10 repetitions on each side.

Place a resistance band around your ankles or your knees. Get into a small athletic stance and then side step for

10 steps one way and do 10 step back to the middle.

Also, make sure that you are keeping tension on the band the entire time. Do not let your knees cave inwards. What this does is this helps strengthen again the hips and your outer thigh, which help keep the, protect the trail knee from caving in words.

Now this one looks really easy until you start doing it for about 30 seconds. And then suddenly your legs will remember that they also have an opinion.

The last exercise I want to talk about is calf raises. Once again, two sets of 10 repetitions, stand behind a chair or near a wall for support. slowly rise up to your toes and then slowly lower yourself back down.

You can do both feet at the beginning but I want you to be able to progress doing this one foot at a time.

Exercises to Support the Trail Knee

What this is going to help is this helps build your lower leg support and improves control throughout the whole kinetic chain. This is a tiny movement but it does have a big payoff.

The calves are a small muscle but they still like to pretend like they're really important. So let's make this even more golf specific. The trail knee gets loaded during your backswing, right?

It helps hold your body in position, it helps you absorb force. And then also if your swing starts to get too aggressive, It can be asked to do too much.

Now these things get worse when stance is too narrow or you try to stay too still in your lower body or if you're backswings forced. If you are chasing power, this can also be a problem.

Finally, if practice a lot on hard ground or uneven lies, you can over-stressing this So if your right knee hurts, it's not always because golf is the problem.

Sometimes the problems is just the way that your knee is being asked to work inside the golf swing. So let's talk about some quick fixes for that and what you can do.

Number one, stop forcing the knee to twist. The knee should not be the main source of rotation. It is not chubby checker. Try to let your hips and trunk rotate together instead of cranking the mean like it owes you money.

number two, work on your hip strength. strong hips help keep the knee from collapsing inwards. Number three is a very simple one, but it gets missed a lot.

Warm up before you play. Just a few minutes of movement can help a lots. Your knee does a better when it's warmed up and you don't ask it to go from sitting in a parked car to full golf swing in the amount of time that takes you to walk from the car, to the tee.

Number four is back off the power swing for now. If you are trying to hit bombs and your knee is angry, just ease up a little bit. You don't need to win the long drive contest at your local Muni with every swing.

Number five is really important. Don't ignore locking or swelling or buckling or giving way.

Golf-Specific Fixes and When to Get Help

if the knee locks or swells a lot or feels unstable like it's not underneath you, that deserves a real evaluation. That is not normal golf soreness. that is your body waving a red flag and saying it is time to go see the doctor.

So here's the bottom line. The trail knee doesn't get a lot of attention, but it takes a LOT of load from the golf swing.

If you fix those things, you will start to notice a change.

And now it's time for my standard disclaimer. Yes, I am a medical doctor, but I'm not your medical doctors. Not yet, anyway. This video is meant to be educational.

It is not specific advice for your situation. Now, if this video helped you, hit like so that it can help other golfers find this. Your lead knee gets the spotlight.

But the trail knee does a lot of the work. And when it starts talking, it's something worth listening to. I'll see you pain free on the fairway.