

K N E E H A B

PATELLAR TENDON FIX

A 3-PHASE ROADMAP TO KILL JUMPER'S KNEE

STOP RESTING. START LOADING.

WELCOME

I AM THE KNEEHABER

Thanks for downloading The Patellar Tendon Fix.

I grew up chasing a career as a professional skier. After four ACL tears in my right knee I had to step away — and spent the last ten years rebuilding my knees and learning what actually works, including how to beat the patellar tendon pain that sidelines so many athletes.

Jumper's knee is one of the most common things people email me about. This guide is the exact roadmap I walk them through.

QUESTIONS? I'VE GOT YOU.

DM me on Instagram @thekneehaber or email hello@thekneehaber.com. — Connor, The Kneehaber

CONTENTS

WHAT'S INSIDE

Why Your Tendon Hurts	What jumper's knee really is, and what heals it
The 3-Phase Roadmap	From constant pain back to sport
Phase 1 — Calm It Down	Isometrics to kill the pain
Phase 2 — Load It Up	Slow heavy strength to rebuild the tendon
Phase 3 — Bulletproof It	Plyometrics + return to sport
Which Phase Are You In?	A 30-second self-check
What's Next	How to get the full protocol

READ FIRST

DISCLAIMER

I am not a medical professional. The information in this guide is based on my own experience rehabbing my knees and coaching others. Individual responses to exercise vary.

Before starting any exercise program — especially if you have a pre-existing condition or injury — consult a qualified healthcare professional. This content is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

If you experience sharp pain, significant swelling, or any concerning symptoms, stop and seek guidance from a healthcare provider. By using this guide, you acknowledge that you do so at your own risk.

THE LOAD PROBLEM

WHY YOUR TENDON HURTS

Patellar tendinopathy — “jumper's knee” — is that nagging pain right below your kneecap. It flares with squatting, jumping, running downhill, or even sitting too long.

Here's what most people get wrong: they rest it. They stop training, wait for it to calm down, then the moment they go back to their sport it flares again. Rest feels like the answer. It isn't.

Your tendon isn't inflamed like a fresh injury — it's a load problem. The tendon got loaded faster than it could adapt, so it's irritated and under-built for what you're asking of it. Rest lets the pain fade but leaves the tendon just as weak, and the cycle repeats.

REST WON'T FIX IT

The fix is the opposite of rest. It's the right load, in the right order, gated by your pain. That's exactly what the next three phases give you.

HOW TO PROGRESS

THE 3-PHASE ROADMAP

Three phases. You don't move to the next until you've earned it. Let pain be your guide — working at 3/10 or lower is your green light.

PHASE 1 — CALM IT DOWN (Isometrics)

Long holds that lower pain and start rebuilding tolerance — your biggest lever for getting out of pain fast.

ADVANCE WHEN: pain is 3/10 or less during and after your isometrics.

PHASE 2 — LOAD IT UP (Slow, Heavy Strength)

Slow, controlled squats and step-downs with progressively heavier load. This is what actually remodels and strengthens the tendon.

ADVANCE WHEN: you can do slow squats pain-free AND you've added weight over a few weeks.

PHASE 3 — BULLETPROOF IT (Plyometrics + Return to Sport)

Springy, explosive work that rebuilds the tendon's ability to store and release energy — so you can run, jump, and cut without it flaring.

START WHEN: your heavy slow squats are pain-free and the load keeps climbing.

PHASE 1 · ISOMETRICS

PHASE 1: CALM IT DOWN

Start here if daily life or squats hurt 4/10 or more. Find a knee angle where the hold is challenging but pain stays at 3/10 or less.

EXERCISE	REPS	# OF SETS	VIDEO
Backward Sled Drag / Walk (Warm-Up) <i>No sled? Walking backward on a turned-off treadmill works great too.</i>	3–5 Min	1	Watch
Banded TKEs	20 / Side	2	Watch
Wall Sit (Isometric)	30–45 Sec	2–3	Watch
Spanish Squat Iso	30–45 Sec	2–3	Watch
Split Squat Iso	30–45 Sec / Side	2–3	Watch
Tibialis Raise	20 Reps	2	Watch
Leg Extension Iso (optional)	30 Sec	2–3	Watch

ADVANCE TO PHASE 2 WHEN: Your pain sits at 3/10 or less during and after the holds — usually 1–3 weeks.

PHASE 2 · SLOW HEAVY STRENGTH

PHASE 2: LOAD IT UP

Once pain is 3/10 or less, it's time to load. The magic is slow tempo — about 3 seconds down, 3 seconds up — which forces the tendon to take the load and get stronger.

EXERCISE	REPS	# OF SETS	VIDEO
Backward Sled Drag / Walk (Warm-Up) <i>No sled? Walking backward on a turned-off treadmill works great too.</i>	3–5 Min	1	Watch
Tibialis Raise (Warm-Up)	20 Reps	2	Watch
Spanish Squat Iso (Warm-Up)	30 Sec	2	Watch
Slow Tempo Squat (3-1-3) <i>Make your first set or two light to warm up the movement. No barbell? Goblet-hold a dumbbell, or hold two on your shoulders — barbell preferred so you can load heavier.</i>	4–5 Reps	5	Watch
Slant Board Squat (slow)	8–10 Reps	3	Watch
Slant Board Step-Down (slow)	6–8 / Side	3	Watch
Slow Tempo Spanish Squat	8–10 Reps	3	Watch

ADVANCE TO PHASE 3 WHEN: Your slow heavy squats are pain-free and your load has climbed steadily for a few weeks.

PHASE 3 · PLYOMETRICS

PHASE 3: BULLETPROOF IT

Now we teach the tendon to be springy again. Quality over fatigue — the moment reps get sloppy or pain climbs past 4/10, you're done for the day.

EXERCISE	REPS	# OF SETS	VIDEO
Backward Sled Drag / Walk (Warm-Up) <i>No sled? Walking backward on a turned-off treadmill works great too.</i>	3–5 Min	1	Watch
Tibialis Raise (Warm-Up)	20 Reps	2	Watch
Bottom-Half Slant Board Squat (Primer)	20 Reps	2	Watch
Pogo Hops	20 Hops	3	Watch
Box Jumps (land soft)	5 Reps	3	Watch
Single-Leg Pogo Hops	15 / Side	3	Watch
Broad Jumps	5 Reps	3	Watch
Depth Drop to Single-Leg Stick	5 / Side	3	Watch
Slow Tempo Squat (keep strength)	6 Reps	3	Watch

QUALITY OVER FATIGUE

Crisp, controlled, pain-free reps only. Once basic plyos feel clean, layer in the demands of YOUR sport — running, jumping, cutting — before you fully return.

SELF-CHECK

WHICH PHASE ARE YOU IN?

A 30-second gut check. Starting in the right place is half the battle — when in doubt, start one phase earlier than you think.

- Start in Phase 1 if: you have pain with daily life (stairs, sitting, walking), or squatting hurts more than a 4–5/10.
- Start in Phase 2 if: your pain has calmed down (3/10 or less) and you get through isometrics comfortably — but heavy or fast training still flares you up.
- Start in Phase 3 if: slow, heavy squats feel pain-free, your load has been climbing, and you're ready to get back to sport.

TENDONS REWARD PATIENCE

Don't rush the phases. The athletes who beat jumper's knee for good are the ones who earn each phase instead of skipping ahead.

READY TO FIX IT

WHAT'S NEXT?

Start Phase 1 today — your tendon doesn't need rest, it needs the right load. This roadmap is the map. If you want the full turn-by-turn plan that takes the guesswork out, here's where it lives.

THE PATELLAR TENDON FIX, IN THE APP

NOW LIVE

The complete plan inside the Strong Knees System: every exercise with video, exact loads and tempo, the progression scheme, a flare-up and deload protocol, and return-to-sport testing, with Foundations, Strength, Performance and the Knee Mobility Library alongside it. It's live now, and it's the fastest way to run this roadmap on a follow-along app instead of a PDF.

[SEE THE STRONG KNEES SYSTEM →](#)

1:1 ONLINE COACHING

Want my eyes on your specific knee? Personalized programming and video form review.

[APPLY AT THEKNEEHABER.COM/COACHING →](https://www.thekneehaber.com/coaching)

Thanks for being here. Now go get after it.

— Connor, *The Kneehaber*