



Checklist for Acute Examination of the Knee and Thigh

History

Ask questions pertaining to the following:

- ☐ Chief complaint
- ☐ Mechanism of injury (contact or noncontact)
- ☐ Position of knee and foot at time of injury
- ☐ Unusual sounds or sensations
- ☐ Type and location of pain or symptoms
- ☐ Previous injury to involved and uninvolved extremities

Observation

- ☐ Visible facial expressions and response to injury
- ☐ Swelling, deformity, abnormal contours, or discoloration
- ☐ Gait, willingness to bear weight
- ☐ Overall position, posture, and alignment of lower extremity
- ☐ Bilateral comparison

Palpation

Bilaterally palpate for pain, tenderness, crepitus, defects, and deformity over the following:

- ☐ Quadriceps muscle (including VMO), suprapatellar tendon, suprapatellar pouch, patella, infrapatellar tendon, tibial tuberosity, patellar retinaculum, and superficial bursae
- ☐ Evidence of plica
- ☐ Medial femoral condyle and epicondyle, MCL, adductor tubercle, pes anserine insertion, medial joint line and tibial plateau, and medial hamstring and gastrocnemius tendons
- ☐ Lateral femoral condyle and epicondyle, LCL, fibular head, IT band, Gerdy's tubercle, lateral joint line and tibial plateau, and biceps femoris and gastrocnemius tendons
- ☐ Hamstring and gastrocnemius muscle bellies and tendons, popliteal fossa

Special Tests

- ☐ Patellar apprehension
- ☐ Uniplanar ligament stress tests (valgus, varus, Lachman, anterior drawer, posterior drawer, and posterior sag sign)
- ☐ Multiplanar ligament stress tests (Slocum, lateral pivot shift maneuver, Hughston's)
- ☐ Meniscal tests (McMurray's, Apley compression)
- ☐ Bilateral comparison

Range of Motion

- ☐ Active ROM for knee flexion and extension, medial and lateral tibial rotation
- ☐ Passive ROM for the same motions
- ☐ Passive ROM for medial, lateral, inferior, and superior patellar glides
- ☐ Bilateral comparison

Strength Tests

- ☐ Perform manual resistance against knee flexion and extension, and knee internal and external rotation.
- ☐ Perform manual resistance against hip flexion and extension with knee flexed and extended.
- ☐ Perform manual resistance against ankle plantar flexion with knee flexed and extended.
- ☐ Check bilaterally and note any pain or weakness.

Neurovascular Tests (if warranted)

- ☐ Sensory, motor (common fibular nerve)
- ☐ Popliteal, posterior tibial, and pedal pulses
- ☐ Sensory, motor, and reflex of lumbar plexus and peripheral nerves