

## BMO Vancouver Marathon Question and Answer Column 2009

*My question is how to prevent my bone just below my knee caps to stop hurting. It feels like a bruise on my bone when I run and especially during the cold season.*

Thank you for your question. To orient us to the area you are asking about, the bone just below your knee cap is called your tibia. The quadriceps muscle attaches to the patella tendon and connects to your tibia. There are a number of reasons as to why this area may be painful. Three of the most common reasons for pain in this area are patella tendonopathy (tendonitis), patellofemoral syndrome or bursitis. The most common cause of these problems is a rapid increase in the volume of your training which can be the result of running too many miles, or doing speed intervals too often. One way to decrease the sensation of a “bruise” in this area is to tape the patella. Another method of decreasing pain over time is to focus on eccentric strengthening of your quadriceps muscles. A physiotherapist can further diagnose your problem and show you the best taping technique and exercises.

During the colder months our muscles and connective tissue take more time to warm up and they may feel more sensitive and stiff. At this time of year it is important to take the appropriate time to warm up with a progressive jog of 15-20 minutes. Following the warm up run progressive dynamic stretches should be incorporated, for instance marching with high knees for one minute. By warming up, your body temperature will increase preparing you to adapt to the range of motion required for running.

You are taking steps to prevent injury by asking questions. During your training continue to listen to your body. Pain is a guide that gives us information that our muscles, joints and ligaments are becoming tired and not adapting to the new stresses we are putting on ourselves. If your pain persists see a health professional so they can guide you in specific stretching and strengthening exercises to prevent further injury.

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