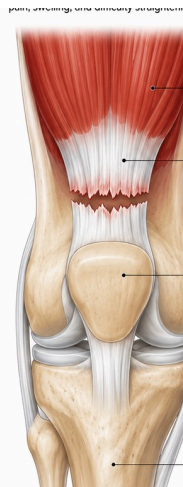


KNEE CONDITION

Quadriceps Tendon Tear

Quadriceps Tendon Rupture — Patient Condition Guide



A quadriceps tendon tear — for education; your anatomy may differ

OVERVIEW

The quadriceps tendon connects the powerful thigh (quadriceps) muscles to the top of the kneecap (patella) and helps you straighten the knee. A complete tear is most common after age 40 and usually happens when a strong load is placed on a slightly bent knee — such as a stumble or fall. When it tears completely, you lose the ability to straighten the leg.

ANATOMY

The quadriceps tendon is the top link in the knee's extensor mechanism — the quadriceps muscles, quadriceps tendon, kneecap, and patellar tendon that straighten the knee together. A tear above the kneecap breaks this chain, and the kneecap may sit lower than normal.

SYMPTOMS

- A pop felt at the front of the thigh or top of the knee
- Pain and swelling just above the kneecap
- Inability to straighten the knee or do a straight-leg raise
- A palpable gap above the kneecap
- A buckling, giving-way knee and difficulty walking

DIAGNOSIS

Dr. Pettit checks for a gap above the kneecap and an inability to straighten the knee against gravity. X-rays may show a low-riding kneecap (patella baja), and MRI or ultrasound confirms the tear and how complete it is.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

A complete quadriceps tendon tear is treated with timely surgical repair — the tendon is reattached to the top of the kneecap with sutures secured to bone. Partial tears with a preserved ability to straighten the knee may be treated in a brace with therapy.

RECOVERY TIMELINE

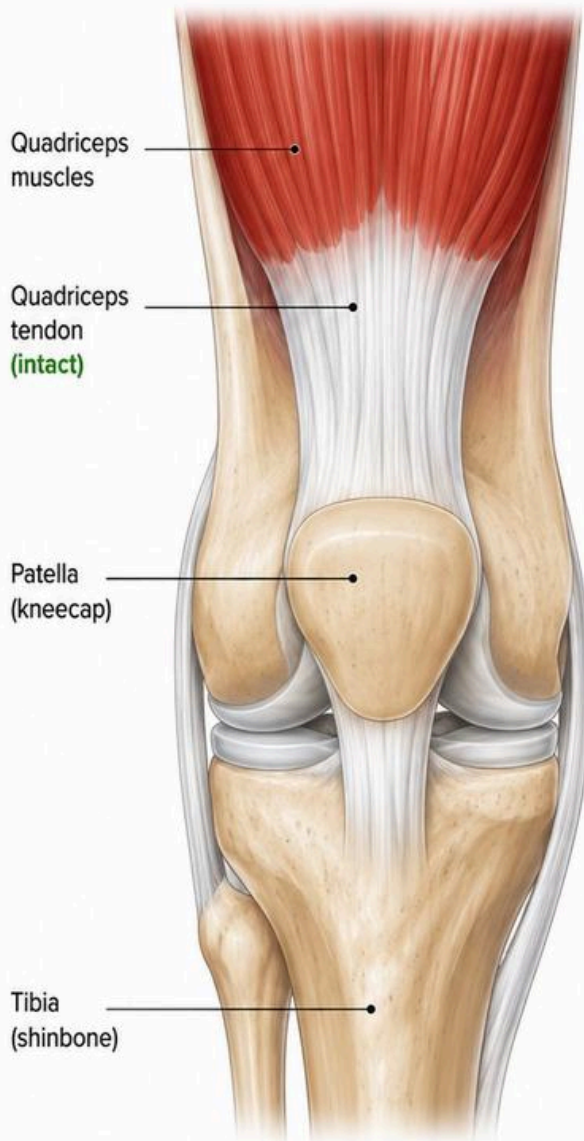
After repair you will be in a brace locked straight with protected weight-bearing. Physical therapy advances bending gradually as the tendon heals, then adds strengthening. Most patients return to full activity around 4–6 months.

QUADRICEPS TENDON TEAR

The quadriceps tendon connects the thigh muscles to the top of the kneecap (patella) and helps straighten the knee.

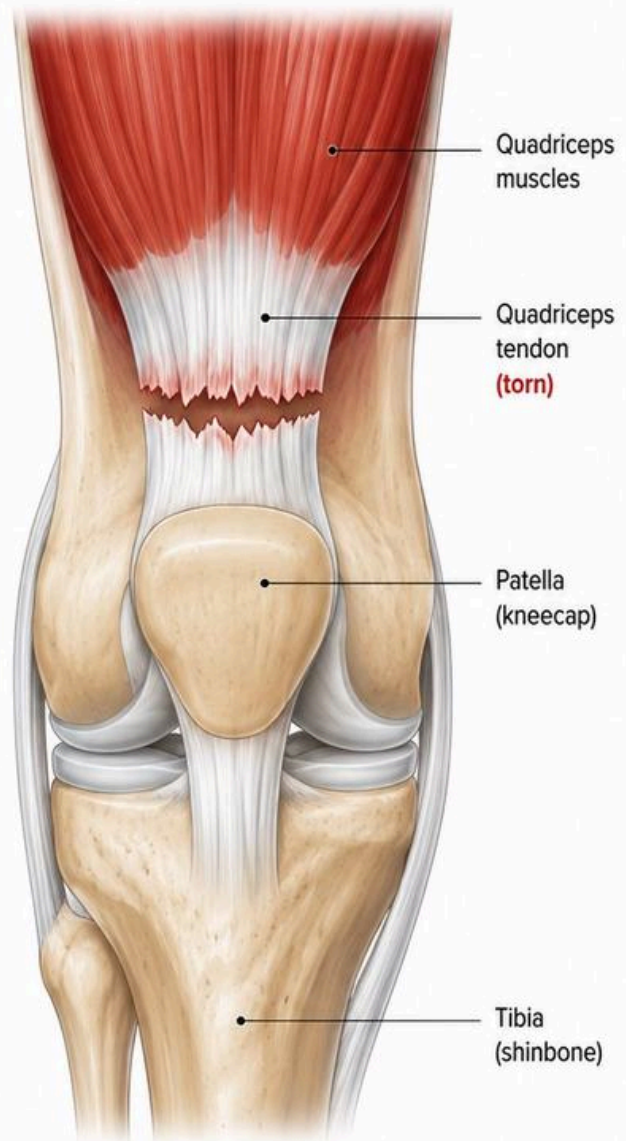
NORMAL QUADRICEPS TENDON

The quadriceps tendon is intact.



QUADRICEPS TENDON TEAR

The quadriceps tendon is torn, often causing pain, swelling, and difficulty straightening the knee.



Quadriceps tendon tear — normal vs. torn · for education; your anatomy may differ



SCAN FOR THE LATEST VERSION ONLINE

robertpettitmd.com/handouts/quadriceps-tendon-tear.pdf

This handout is for general patient education and does not replace personalized medical advice. Always follow the specific instructions given by Dr. Pettit and your care team.