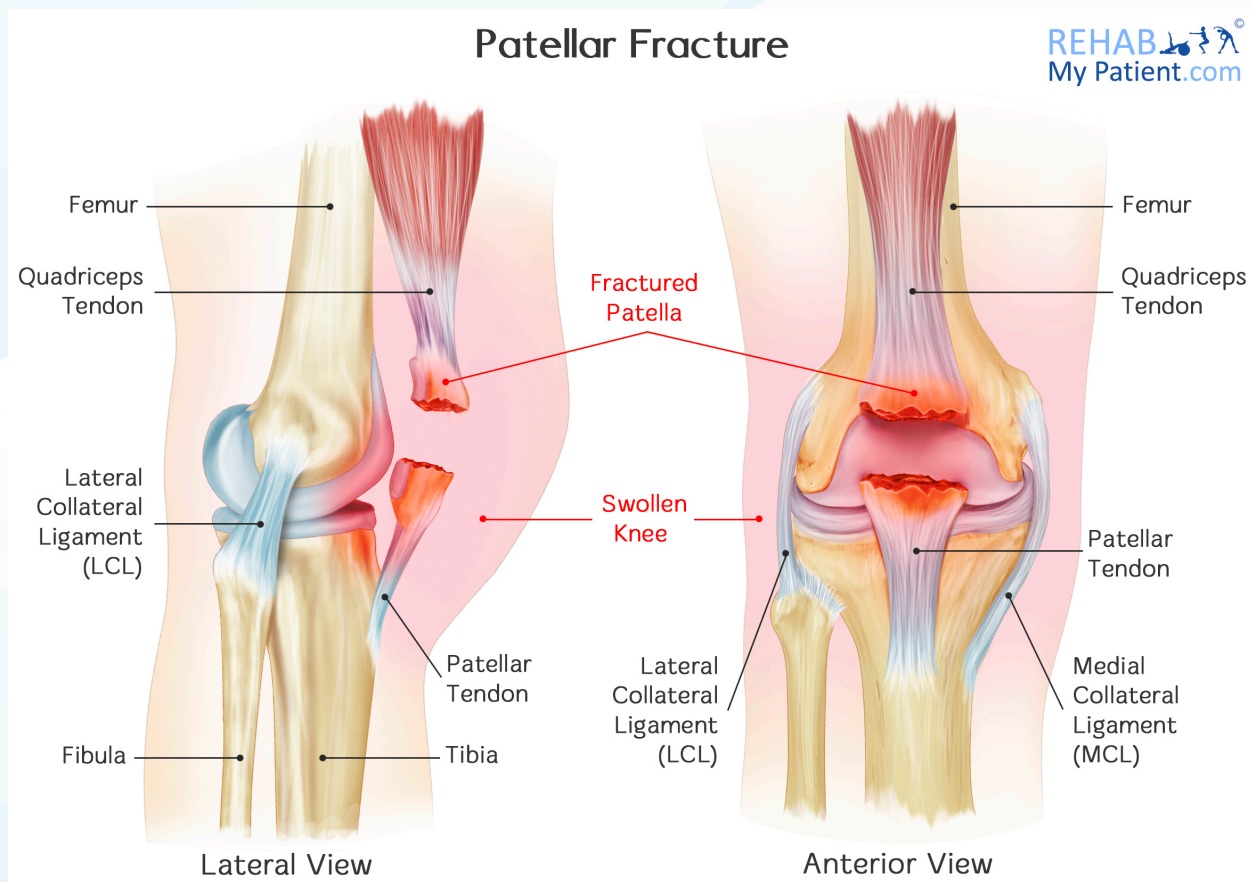


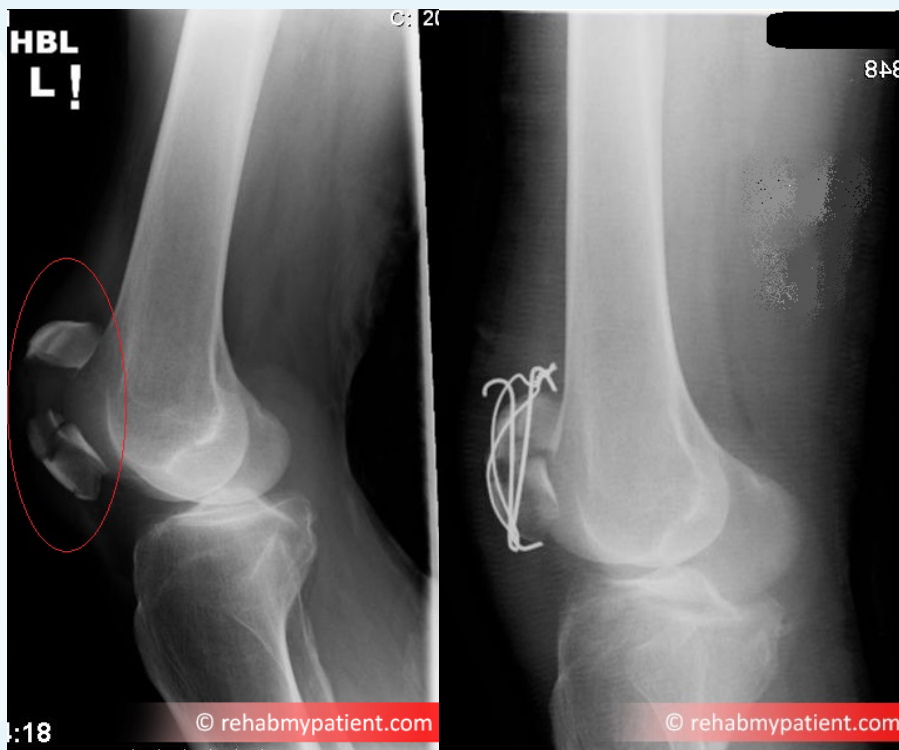
Patellar Fracture

Since the kneecap serves as a shield for the knee joint, it doesn't take much to break it. Falling down onto the knee is one of the most common causes of fractures in the kneecap. These fractures are quite serious and often necessitate surgery to heal properly. Over the long-term, you might end up developing arthritis in the affected knee.

Patellar Fracture Anatomy

The patella is a small bone that is located in the front part of the knee where the shinbone and the thighbone connect. It works to protect the knee and connects the muscles that are in the front part of the thigh to your tibia. Articular cartilage covers the underneath of the patella and the femur to help them glide smoothly along one another as the leg moves.





X-ray showing patella fracture and surgical repair following a fall directly onto the knee cap

How to Treat a Patellar Fracture:

1. Splints or Casts

If the fragments of broken bone haven't been displaced from the force of the injury, you might not have to go through surgery. Splints or casts might be used to keep the knee straight. This ensures the broken ends are in proper position during the healing process. You might have to stay off the leg until the bone has had ample time to heal. Expect the process to take anywhere from six to eight weeks, if not longer. Crutches are often used in this period.

2. Surgery

If the patella has been displaced or pulled apart, surgery might be the only option for you. Fractured bones that are too far apart will often have trouble healing, if they are able to heal on their own at all. The thigh muscles attached to the top of the patella tend to be rather strong, so they can end up pulling the broken parts out of their original position during the healing process. Wire will be used to join the parts of the broken patella.

3. Rehab

Post-surgery, rehab will be important to improve range of motion to the knee and reduce swelling. Post-surgery stiffness is quite common, and can lead to much longer recoveries. Work with a rehab expert to help reduce the onset of secondary stiffness.

Tips:

- Changes in your lifestyle might have to be made to help prevent any future issues and protect the knee.
- Avoid climbing ladders or stairs if you are a bit jittery on your feet.
- Avoid any exercise activities involving repetitive knee bends or squats until the patella has fully healed.
- Since the muscles can often become weak permanently, you might want to participate in a strengthening program with a physical therapist.
- Patellar fractures can cause the cartilage to become damaged, which can lead to arthritis later on in life. Try doing everything you can in the meantime to keep your bones strong and joints flexible.