Knee surgery may do more harm than good

16th July 2026

Hundreds of thousands of people have surgery on their knees. A new study from Finland says many of these people might be wasting their time and money. The surgeons who conducted the study said some knee surgery can make knee problems worse rather than better. The surgeons spent 10 years studying the results of knee operations. They found that surgery on tears in the knee cartilage rarely worked. The doctors said many of the operations were unnecessary. They added that some of the operations they looked at accelerated the rate of cartilage damage. One doctor said: "What has been shown dramatically is that patients who have this procedure have more pain."

In happier knee-related news, doctors from the University of Colorado have discovered a new method to treat chronic knee pain. Dr Leigh Casadaban has performed simple operations on people's knees. Her method involves reducing the flow of blood to pain-causing areas in the knee. Less blood in those areas reduces swelling and pain. Dr Casadaban says her method is more effective than painkilling medicine and physical therapy. She also believes it means people can avoid knee surgery, even total knee replacements. She said her method could "provide years of relief" by reducing pain inside the knee joint. She said 70 per cent of patients have amazing results.

Sources: sciencedaily.com / *scitechdaily.com* / *aol.com*

Writing

We all need to exercise to keep our body strong to avoid surgery. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

thousands / surgery / knees / wasting time / cartilage / damage / patients / pain / news / doctors / blood flow / swelling / medicine / physical therapy / relief / joints

True / False

1) The article says thousands of people have surgery while on their knees. T / F
2) Some doctors said some knee operations are a waste of money. T / F
3) Doctors need to spend 10 years studying before doing knee surgery. T / F
4) The researchers looked at cartridge damage. T / F
5) A new method can help treat long-term pain. T / F
6) The new method limits how much blood goes to a painful area. T / F
7) The new method means people can avoid having a knee replacement. T / F
8) The new method could provide pain relief for months. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

1.	**surgery**	a.	long-term
2.	**conducted**	b.	method
3.	**tears**	c.	lowering
4.	**accelerated**	d.	carried out
5.	**procedure**	e.	movement
6.	**chronic**	f.	rips
7.	**flow**	g.	drugs
8.	**medicine**	h.	an operation
9.	**avoid**	i.	keep away from
10.	**reducing**	j.	increased

Discussion – Student A

a) What do you think about what you read?
b) Have you ever had knee problems?
c) Do you know anyone who has knee problems?
d) Do you ever have pain in your knees?
e) What do you think of total knee replacements?
f) What activities can be difficult with bad knees?
g) How often do you kneel?
h) What questions would you like to ask the doctors?

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Phrase Match

1.	Hundreds of	a.	of blood
2.	many of these people might be	b.	worked
3.	some knee surgery can make knee	c.	wasting their time
4.	surgery on tears in the knee cartilage rarely	d.	knee pain
5.	accelerated the rate of cartilage	e.	medicine
6.	a new method to treat chronic	f.	problems worse
7.	reducing the flow	g.	of relief
8.	Less blood in those areas reduces swelling	h.	thousands of people
9.	painkilling	i.	and pain
10.	her method could provide years	j.	damage

Discussion – Student B

a) Have you ever had surgery?

b) What problems can people have with their knees?

c) Why are knees important?

d) Would you like to be a surgeon?

e) What do you know about the knee?

f) What do you think of the idea of having surgery?

g) How beautiful do you think knees are?

h) What advice would you give someone having knee surgery?

Spelling

1. people might be awtisgn their time
2. ursgoesn who conducted the study
3. studying the results of knee repntaosio
4. many of the operations were srecnyuanes
5. ltcderaaeec the rate of cartilage damage
6. have this prudeorce
7. a new method to treat ccornhi knee pain
8. Her oemhtd involves reducing the flow
9. Less blood in those areas reduces wslnelig
10. her method is more ceiftfeve
11. physical hpeayrt
12. reducing pain inside the knee ojnti

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. d	3. f	4. j	5. b
6. a	7. e	8. g	9. i	10. c

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions. (Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	How many people have surgery on their knees?
2.	What country is the research study from?
3.	How long did doctors spend looking at knee operations?
4.	What did doctors say about surgery on tears in the knee cartilage?
5.	What did doctors say happened to the rate of cartilage damage?
6.	Where is there happier knee-related news from?
7.	What does a new method reduce the flow of to painful areas?
8.	What does less blood reduce?
9.	What could the new surgery help people to avoid?
10.	What percentage of patients had 'amazing results' with the new method?

Speaking – Doctors

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important doctors at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Pediatrician
- Cardiologist
- Dermatologist
- Neurologist
- Psychiatrist
- Obstetrician
- General Practitioner
- Radiologist

Answers – True False

1	F	2	T	3	F	4	F	5	T	6	T	7	T	8	F

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.

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