



**MIDJERSEY**  
**ORTHOPAEDICS**  
*LIVE LIFE BETTER.*

## Growing Pains

Growing pains are episodic benign pains described as spasms in the legs and most commonly occur at nighttime. The pain can be severe enough to awaken a child from sleep. These pains may present in the afternoon hours, but never occur in the morning. Growing pains commonly occur between the ages of 2-12 years old. We suspect that muscular overuse, dehydration, and potassium depletion resulting from daytime exercise and routine sports activity may trigger growing pains. The pain is typically poorly localized and diffuse in nature.

### **Treatment:**

Lifestyle modifications and symptomatic treatment are the remedies of choice. Discomfort can be eased with massage, hydration, potassium replenishment, stretching before bed, use of a heating pad, and oral analgesics (such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen). Frequently, acetaminophen (Tylenol) one hour before and after exercise can be beneficial.

### **Dosing:**

Tylenol \_\_\_\_\_ (15 mg / Kg) every 4-6 hours as needed for pain, or

Motrin \_\_\_\_\_ (10 mg / Kg) every 8 hours as needed for pain.

**1. STANDING HAMSTRING STRETCH:** Place the heel of your leg on a stool about 15 inches high. Keep your knee straight. Lean forward, bending at the hips until you feel a mild stretch in the back of your thigh. Make sure you do not roll your shoulders and bend at the waist when doing this or you will stretch your lower back instead. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.



**2. QUADRICEPS STRETCH:** Stand an arm's length away from the wall, facing straight ahead. Brace yourself by keeping the hand on the uninjured side against the wall. With your other hand, grasp the ankle of the injured leg and pull your heel toward your buttocks. Don't arch or twist your back and keep your knees together. Hold this stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.



**3. QUADRICEPS ISOMETRICS:** Sitting on the floor with your injured leg straight and your other leg bent, press the back of your knee into the floor by tightening the muscles on the top of your thigh. Hold this position 10 seconds. Relax. Do 3 sets of 10.



**4. HEEL STRETCHING:** We recommend the following program of exercises three times each day (morning, noon and evening), for 5-10 minutes each session.

Chose a set of stairs that has at least one, but preferably two handrails. Stand on the bottom step and hold the handrail.

Place the ball of the affected foot at the outer edge of the step. Allow your heel to slowly drop down for a ten to fifteen second stretch. Relax by then supporting your weight with your other foot.

Stretches should be done slowly and carefully. **DO NOT BOUNCE OR FORCE THE FOOT.** The morning session should be done after your muscles are warm.

If you do not have stairs in your home, use a foot stool at a counter where you can grasp firmly to something for balance.



Some mild, temporary discomfort occurs with most stretching exercises. If moderate or persistent pain occurs, discontinue this exercise.