



FREE GUIDE

The On-Your-Feet Knee Guide

7 simple things that help when your knee aches by the afternoon — for anyone who's on their feet all day.

PURE SUPPORT

Before we start

If you're reading this, chances are you're on your feet for most of the day — behind a till, on a ward, in a classroom, on a shop floor — and by mid-afternoon your knee has started reminding you it's there. You're not alone in this, and it's not something you did wrong.

This isn't a guide about running marathons or fixing an old sports injury. It's about the ordinary, everyday ache that comes from hours of standing and walking, and the small, practical things that genuinely help get you through hour eight feeling better than hour two. None of this replaces advice from a doctor or physiotherapist — think of it as the things worth trying first.

Why knees ache by the afternoon, not the morning

Your knee is built to bend and carry weight, not to hold one position or repeat the same small motion for hours without a break. Over a long shift, three things stack up: the cartilage gets less of a break between steps, the muscles that usually help support the joint get tired and start doing less of the work, and small amounts of swelling build up around the joint. None of that shows up at 9am. By 3pm, it does.

The good news is that most of the things that make this worse during the day are also the easiest to fix.

7 things that help

1 Give your knee something to grip, not just squeeze

A lot of standard sleeves just squeeze the whole leg evenly, which feels supportive for the first hour and then slowly works its way down your leg as you move. What actually keeps a sleeve doing its job for a full shift is grip at specific points — bands that hold onto the skin rather than sliding on top of it — combined with a strap you can adjust as the day goes on. If you're already wearing a sleeve and re-adjusting it every hour, that's a sign it's the fit or the grip, not your knee, that's the problem.

2 Check what's under your feet before you blame your knee

Footwear affects knee load more than most people expect. Flat, worn-out, or unsupportive shoes for an 8+ hour shift change how force travels up through your ankle and into your knee with every single step. If your shoes are more than a year of daily wear old, or you can feel the floor a bit too well through the sole, that's worth addressing before anything else on this list.

3 Take a 90-second reset every couple of hours

You don't need a proper break to make a difference — just enough to stop the same motion repeating for hours straight. Every couple of hours: shift your weight fully onto the other leg for a moment, roll each ankle a few times, and do 8-10 slow, gentle knee bends (only as far as comfortable). It resets circulation and gives the joint a brief change of pattern.

4 Build a little strength around the joint

You don't need a gym for this. Two simple moves done a few times a week help the muscles around the knee share more of the load: Quad sets — sit with your leg straight, tighten the muscle on top of your thigh for 5 seconds, release, repeat 10 times each leg. Step-ups — using a low step or stair, step up and down slowly, 10 times each leg. Stop if either causes sharp pain, not just tiredness.

5 Mind how you stand, not just how long you stand

Standing with your weight evenly on both feet, knees soft rather than locked straight, puts far less cumulative strain on the joint than locking your knees or leaning your weight onto one side for long stretches — a common habit when you're tired. If you catch yourself locking a knee while standing still, that's worth noticing and correcting through the day.

6 Ice after a long day, not before it

As a simple rule: ice calms things down after activity (10-15 minutes, wrapped, never directly on skin), while heat before activity can help loosen a stiff joint first thing in the morning. Using them the wrong way round doesn't cause harm, it just doesn't help as much.

7 Know the difference between “achy” and “wrong”

An ache that builds through the day and eases with rest is common and usually manageable with the steps above. It's worth seeing a doctor if you notice: ongoing swelling that doesn't go down overnight, the knee locking or catching, a feeling that it might give way, pain that wakes you at night, or warmth and redness around the joint. Those are signs worth having checked properly rather than managed at home.

Keep this handy

None of these seven things require buying anything — they're worth doing regardless of what's already in your routine. If you do want a bit of extra support while you work through them, that's what we built Pure Support for: a compression sleeve designed specifically for the anti-slip problem in tip #1, sized for real all-day wear, and tested by people on their feet just like you.

Whichever you choose, we hope your knee feels a little more like your own by hour eight.

— The Pure Support team

This guide is for general information only and isn't a substitute for advice from a doctor, physiotherapist, or other qualified healthcare professional. If you're experiencing persistent or worsening knee pain, please get it checked by a professional.