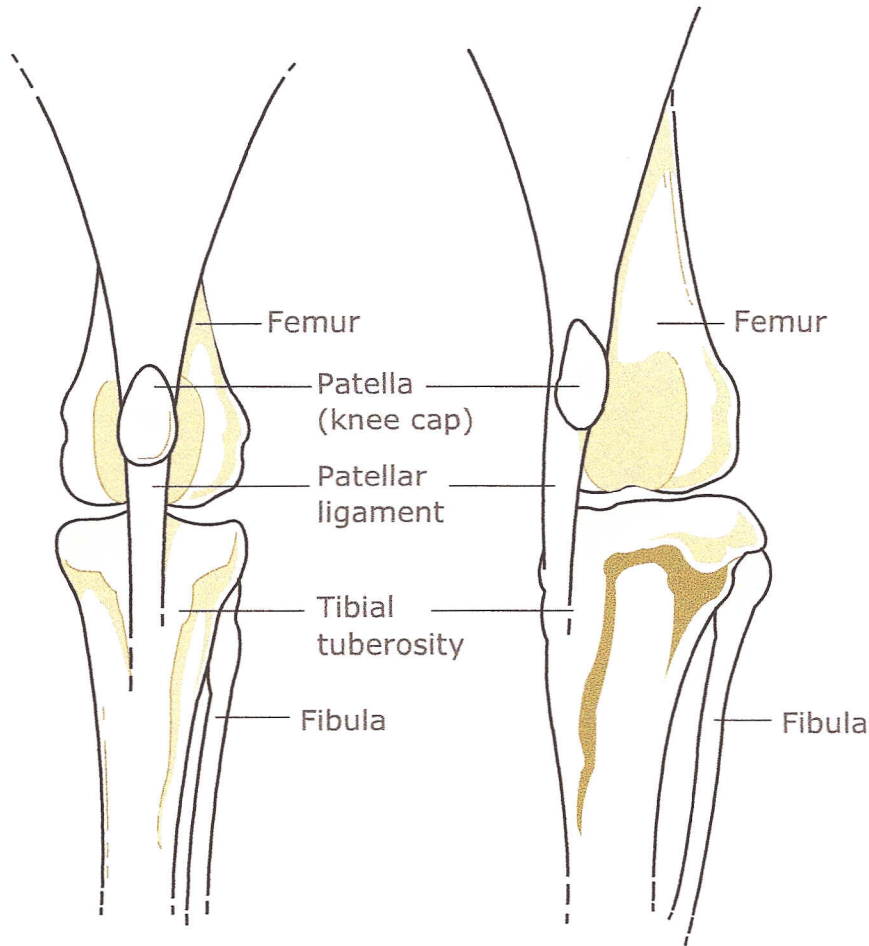


Luxating Patella Cranial View: Mechanisms of patellar luxation.



Normal Anatomy of Knee

Patellar Luxation

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The patella, or kneecap, is found on the inner surface of the patellar ligament. It sits over the middle of the knee joint and glides back and forth in the trochlear groove. A luxating patella pops out of its groove and moves to one side or the other when the knee is extended. This happens either because the patellar ligament is not attached properly on the midline of the tibia, or because the trochlear groove is too shallow. There are several grades of patellar luxation, from an occasional luxation to a state of permanent luxation. The severity may worsen over time. When the kneecap luxates, the knee cannot move normally. Animals with this condition may learn how to 'hyperextend' the knee joint and snap the patella back into place. A luxating patella predisposes the joint to other injuries, including cruciate ligament rupture. If the condition is not corrected surgically, arthritis will eventually develop. For further information, see our Client Education Handout Series.