

Knee Trauma

By Brian Beise

EXPERT ADVICE

ACL Surgery Success Rate

“Our understanding of the common, yet complex ACL injury continues to evolve. ACL injuries often occur in conjunction with other stabilizing structures in the knee which can effect performance as much or more than the ACL itself. For recreational or daily life levels of activity, isolated ACL reconstruction is very successful at decreasing symptomatic instability of the knee. For elite or professional athletes involved in high demand ACL dependent sports, return to play rates range from high 80 to low 90% range.”



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Orthopaedics

Large, complex joints, the knees are often one of the most problematic areas of the body—particularly when it comes to sports injuries. Damage to these workhorse joints are extremely common, and can be either acute or chronic.

ACUTE KNEE INJURIES

Acute knee injuries are usually due to a blow to the knee, an abnormal twist



or hyperextension, or a bad fall. Common ones include sprains and strains to ligaments or tendons, ligament tears, and tears to the cartilage that pads the knee joint.

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons reports that the most common sports injuries to the knee involve the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) and the medial collateral ligament (MCL). ACL tears can occur when you suddenly change direction, slow down when running, or land hard from a jump. Skiing, basketball, and any sport that requires cleats increase the risk of a torn ACL, while any contact sport that poses risk of a direct blow to the outside of the knee can lead to MCL injuries.

CHRONIC KNEE INJURIES

Chronic knee injuries tend to come from activities with repetitive movements such as cycling and long-distance running. Two common chronic knee injuries are “runner’s knee” and “jumper’s knee.”

- “Runner’s knee” refers to pain behind or around the kneecap. It may be caused by friction of the iliotibial band on the side of the knee or a kneecap that does not move or track correctly when the knee is bent or straightened.
- “Jumper’s knee” refers to pain in the tendon that attaches the kneecap to the shinbone. As the name suggests, it is usually caused by excessive jumping, so basketball and volleyball players are more at-risk.

TREATMENT

Treatment for a knee injury may involve the P.R.I.C.E method (see “Sports Injuries Overview”), a knee immobilizer or brace, physical therapy, medicine, or even surgery, depending on the location, type, and severity of the injury. Strengthening the muscles around the knee can help relieve pressure from the joint and aid in recovery and prevention of future injuries. 🏃

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