

Anterior Cruciate Ligament Fact Sheet

Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL)

The knee is comprised of the bottom end of the femur (thigh) and the upper end of the tibia (shin) and the patella (knee cap). The major ligaments of the knee are the Anterior Cruciate (ACL), the Posterior Cruciate (PCL), and the Medial (MCL) and Lateral (LCL) Collateral Ligaments. These, along with the muscles acting on the knee provide the joint's stability

How does injury happen?

Injury of the ACL most often occurs when an athlete is pivoting, decelerating suddenly or landing from a jump. The injury can also be caused by another player falling across the knee. Women are more likely to suffer an ACL injury than men.



Signs and symptoms?

Most athletes who experience a full tear of the ACL describe a loud sound such as a 'pop' or 'crack'. This is often followed by a few minutes of extreme pain. A torn ACL is often accompanied a large tense swelling of the knee.

First Aid?

It is very important to limit the bleeding and swelling as much as possible as the accumulation of blood slows down the healing process dramatically. Initial treatment should be:

- Rest the person
- Apply ice to the area
- Compression—wrap a bandage around the ice pack to keep it securely in place and to help in further swelling
- Elevate the ankle to a point where it is above the level of the persons heart (yes that high!!!)
- Referral to an appropriate medical professional

The No HARM protocol should also be applied – no heat, no alcohol, no running or activity, and no massage. This will ensure decreased swelling and bleeding in the injured area. A sports medicine professional should be seen as soon as possible to determine the extent of the injury and to provide advice on treatment required.

Treatment/Rehabilitation

Surgical reconstruction is a very common method used to repair a completely torn ACL. This usually involves replacing the torn ACL. Rehabilitation for a reconstructed ACL will be conducted under the direction of an orthopaedic surgeon and the supervision of a physiotherapist

Call Armadale Central Physio on 9399 5020 for an assessment and diagnosis