Anterior Cruciate Ligament Sprain (ACL)

What is it?

One of four ligaments which holds the knee together from the front. Commonly injured during activities where there is a lot of direction changes and possible impacts.

What causes it?

Most common mechanism for this injury is when the knee forcefully rotates while the foot is planted. Occasionally a blow to the knee, especially if the foot is fixed as well.

Symptoms

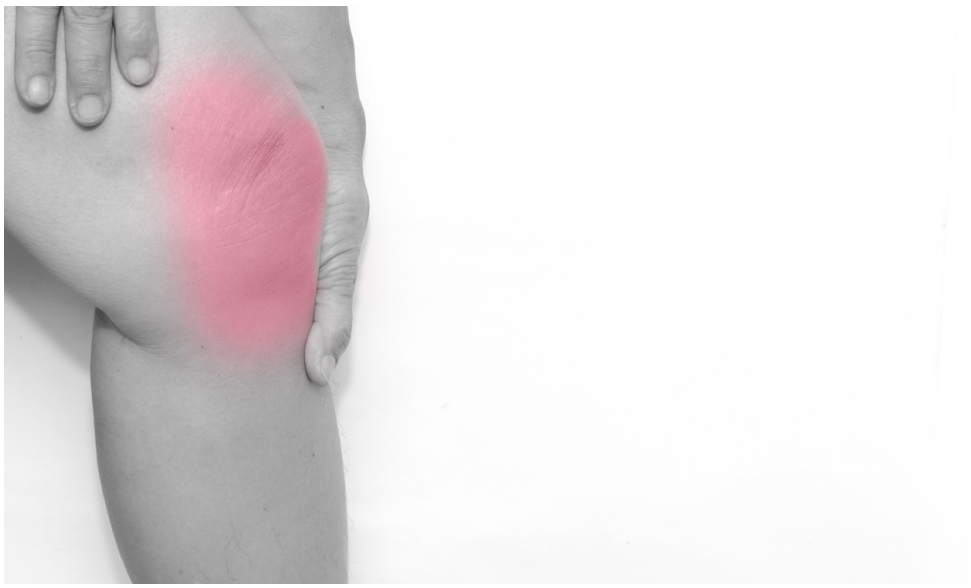
Pain that immediately may go away. Swelling in the knee joint. Instability in the knee, especially the tibia.

Top Tips

Ice, immobilise and acquire prescription anti-inflammatories as soon as possible

How to Treat it

RICER. Immediate referral to medical professional. Immobilisation.



Rehab & Prevention

Once stability and strength return and pain subsides, gradual introduction of activities such as stationary bike. Range of motion and strengthening exercises. Swimming and non-weight bearing exercises until strength returns to normal. Strengthening the quadriceps, hamstrings and calves will help protect the ACL. Proper warm ups and cool downs.

Definitions

ACL – band of tough fibrous tissue at the front of your knee, connecting thigh bone to the shin bone of your lower leg. Helps to stabilise the knee joint.

RICER – refer, ice, compress, elevate and refer

Associated Conditions

- Medial Collateral Ligament Sprain (MCL)
- Meniscus Tear
- Bursitis
- Knee (synovial) Plica
- Osteochondritis Dissecans
- Patellofemoral Pain Syndrome
- Patellar Tendinitis (Jumper's Knee)
- Chondromalacia Patellae (Runner's Knee)
- Subluxing or Dislocating Knee Cap

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References: The Anatomy of Sports Injuries by Brad Walker, Anatomy & Physiology by Louise Tucker and Google.com