

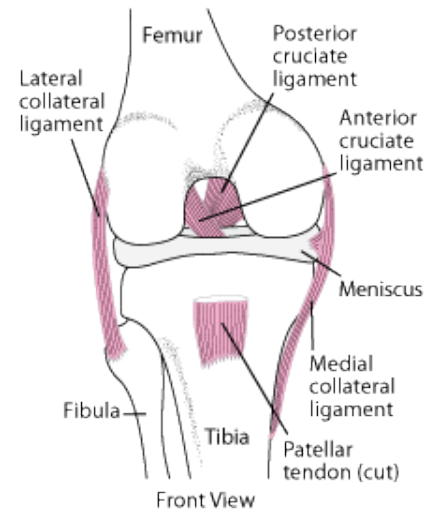
# ANTERIOR CRUCIATE LIGAMENT (ACL) TEAR

## WHAT IS IT?

The anterior cruciate ligament, commonly known as the 'ACL' is an important ligament within the knee. It is one of the most common knee injuries to occur.

The ACL attaches to the thighbone (femur) and down to the shinbone (tibia). The anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) crosses in front of the posterior cruciate ligament (PCL) to form an X. On the end of the thigh bone (femur) and the shin bone (tibia) there are cartilage pads (menisci), which act as shock absorbers in the knee. These can also be injured when injuring the ACL.

The ligament is responsible for preventing the knee from moving forward or backward too much. On either side of the two bones there are two strong ligaments, the medial collateral ligament (MCL) on the inside and the lateral collateral ligament (LCL) on the outside, these provide support from sideways movements.



## HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

- Changing direction rapidly
- Stopping suddenly
- Slowing down while running
- Landing from a jump incorrectly
- Direct contact or collision, such as a football tackle

Occasionally, people hear or feel a pop in the knee when the injury occurs. This suggests that the ACL maybe torn.

## MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS

- Pain in the knee
- Swollen
- Stiff
- Bruised
- Instability "Buckle" feeling
- The knee may feel locked
- May not be able to walk

## TREATMENT

- A torn ACL will not heal without surgery. But nonsurgical treatment may be effective for patients who are elderly or have a very low activity level.
- Most people will have to undergo surgery. This will be a reconstruction of the ligament, where the surgeon will take another piece of tissue called a graft and uses that to rebuild the ACL.

- Whether your treatment involves surgery or not, rehabilitation plays a vital role in getting you back to your daily activities. A rehabilitation program will help you regain knee strength and motion. Speak to your health care professional about the treatment options available to you.

**References:**

- <http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=a00549>
- <http://www.msmanuals.com/en-au/home/injuries-and-poisoning/fractures-dislocations-and-sprains/knee-sprains-and-related-injuries>
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**Image Credit:**

- <http://www.msmanuals.com/en-au/home/injuries-and-poisoning/fractures-dislocations-and-sprains/knee-sprains-and-related-injuries>