

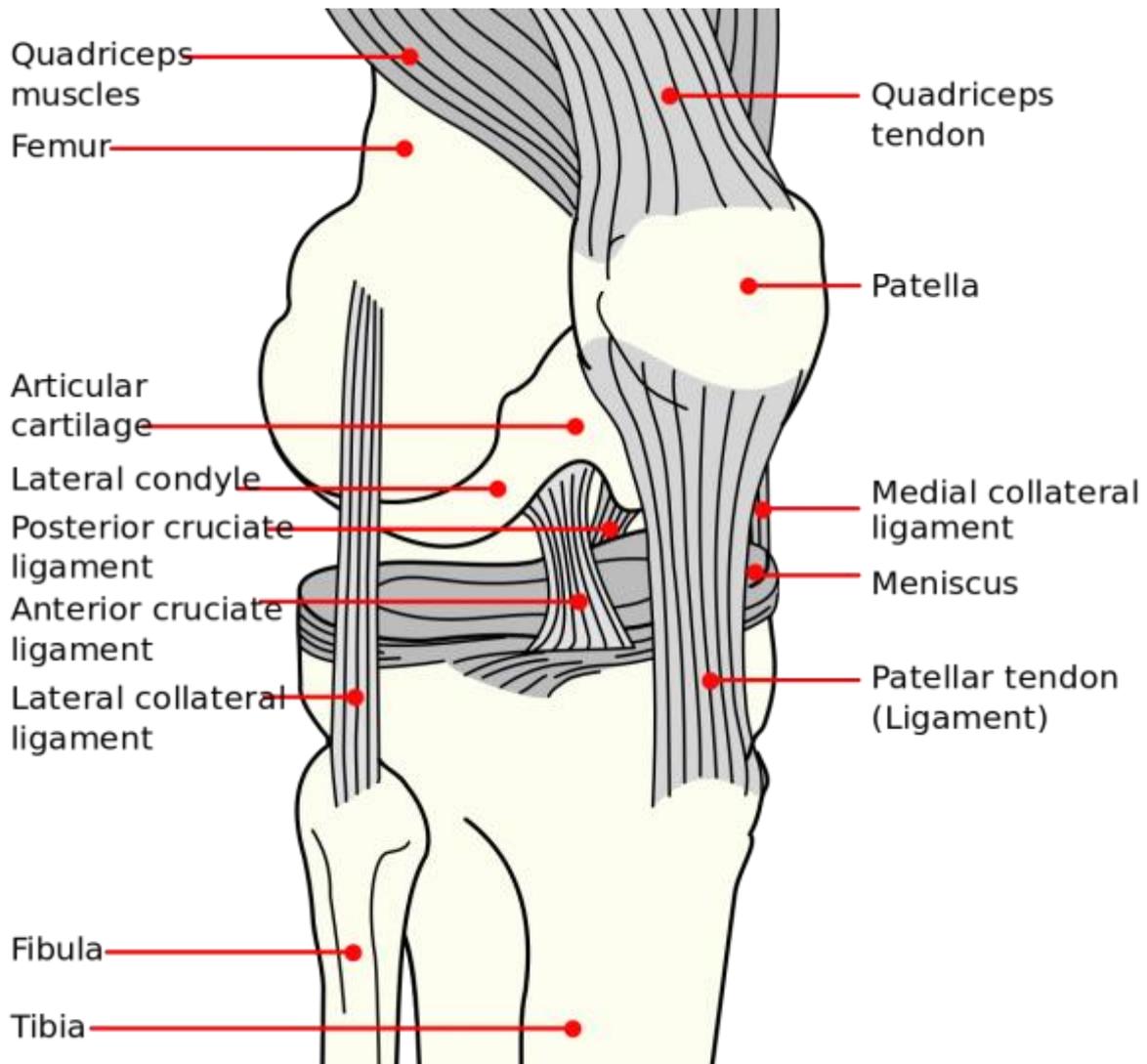
# Knee Ligament injuries



Ligaments are tough bands of tissue that connect the bones in your body. There are several ligaments around the knee but two of the most important ones are the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) and the posterior cruciate ligament (PCL). Other ligaments include the medial collateral ligament (MCL) and the lateral collateral ligament (LCL). Too much stress on these ligaments can cause them to stretch too far or even snap completely.

The ACL and other ligaments of the knee are commonly injured by,

- Sudden twisting on the knee
- Over extending the knee
- Getting hit on the knee
- Landing awkwardly



After injuring the ligaments of the knee there can be sudden swelling, pain, limitation of movement and an inability to weight bear. The joint could feel loose or there could be a snap or popping heard at the time of injury.

## Treatment

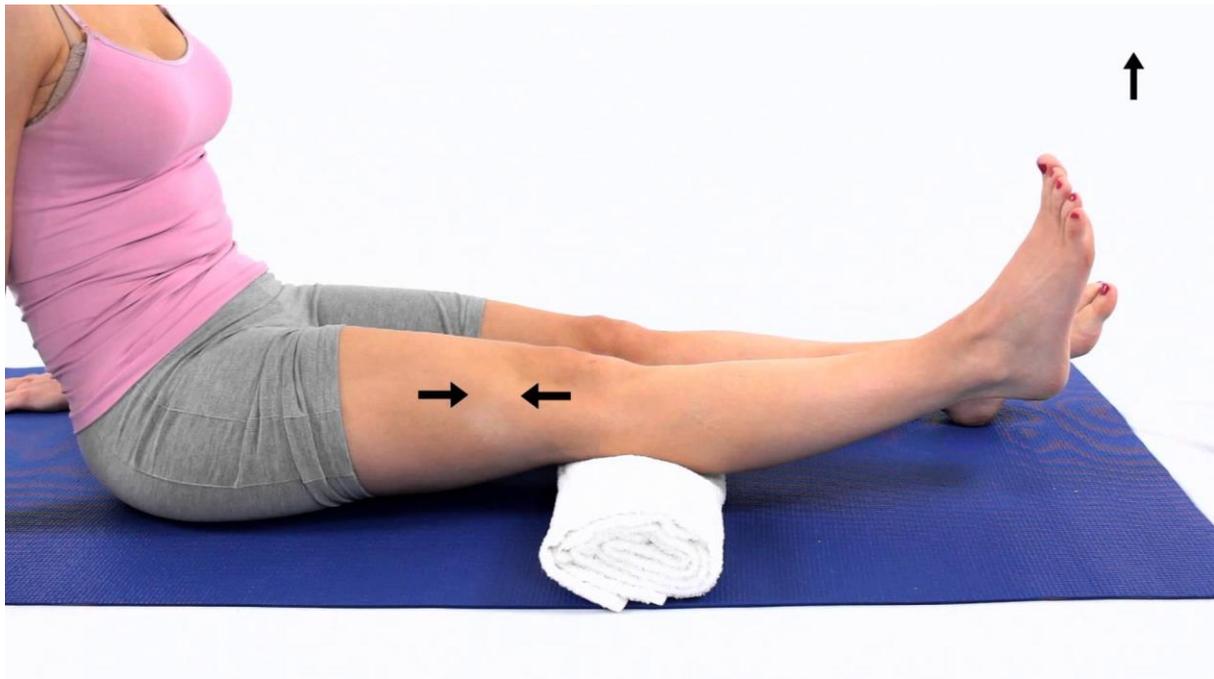
Initially it is important to follow the RICE principle;

- Rest the affected area for at least the first 48 hours. You may require crutches to avoid putting weight on your leg.
- Ice can help to reduced swelling and inflammation. Only use for 20 minutes at a time but do not apply ice directly to the skin.
- Compression can help to prevent additional swelling. Wear an elastic compression bandage and remove for sleeping.
- Elevation can help to reduce swelling. Recline when you rest, and put your leg up higher than your heart.

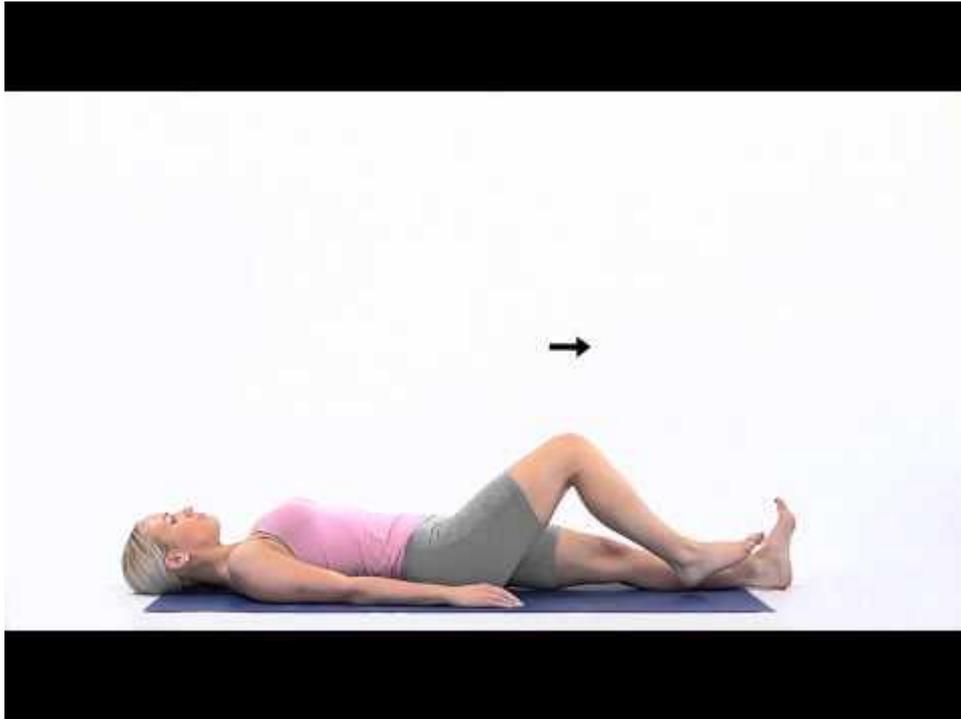
If you feel you have a mild knee ligament injury you should see your GP. If you suspect you may have suffered a fracture or have immediate severe swelling into the knee and are struggling to walk you should attend your local A&E department.

After the injury has started to settle down you should try to get the knee moving as normal. Gentle bending and straightening of the knee can help to restore normal movement and improve how you walk.

The following exercises are likely to be useful:



- Place a rolled up towel under your knee
- Tighten your quadriceps (front thigh muscle) and use it to straighten your knee
- Your heel should lift away from the floor
- Hold for 10 seconds and then slowly relax.
- Repeat up to 10 times



- Laying down, slide your foot towards your bottom to bend your knee
- Then return the knee to a straightened position
- Repeat the movement for up to one minute
- Repeat regularly throughout the day

Try to walk without limping if possible and use the knee as normally as your pain allows. If you play sports a gradual return would be recommended.

If the initial swelling and inflammation is settled and you are still having problems with your knee giving way or feeling unstable you may be referred for some physiotherapy. After being assessed you are likely to be given a progressive programme of strengthening and stability exercises to help you improve the dynamic stability of your knee.

If you have suffered a complete tear of one of your knee ligaments you may require surgery to repair this, which is often the case with ACL ruptures. An extensive course of physiotherapy will be offered following an ACL repair