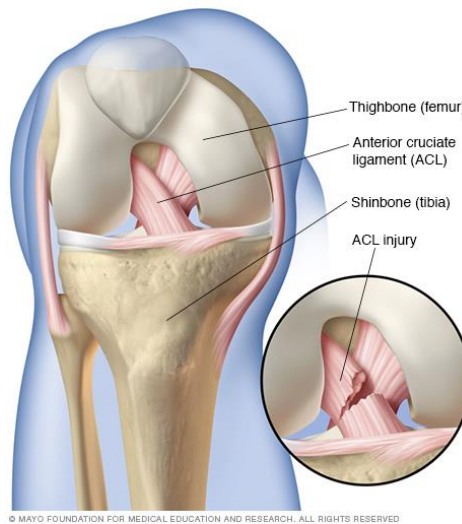


# ACL Injuries

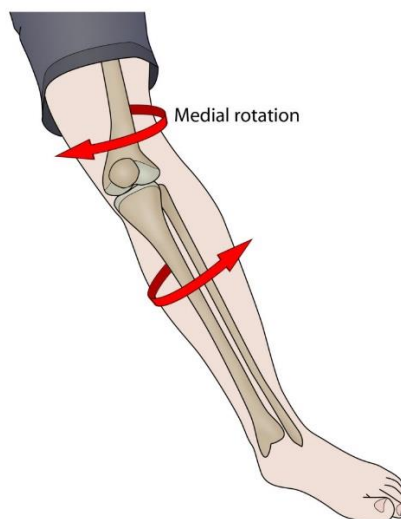
## What in the world is an ACL?

“ACL” is short for **Anterior Cruciate Ligament**, which is a ligament deep inside of your knee that provides stability. This ligament prevents the tibia (shin bone) from sliding too far forward. This is important in maintaining stability during everyday activities like walking and navigating stairs, but is especially important for those who are active.



## How do ACLs get injured and who is at risk?

ACLs are most commonly injured when a foot is planted and the leg/body pivots over it, or if the knee is hyperextended. This occurs most often when playing a sport where sudden stops or quick changes in direction are common such as soccer, football, and downhill skiing. Young female athletes are especially vulnerable due to the alignment of their hips and knees.



### **I've just injured my ACL, what can I expect now?**

Every case is different, and so is every surgeon. If you are a young, active person you will most likely need surgical reconstruction to repair your ACL to get you back to your sport and/or activities as quickly and safely as possible. There are many different types of ACL surgery, some of them involve grafting part of one of your tendons to replace your ACL, or even using a transplanted tendon. No matter what surgical procedure used, you will need to spend some time with us in physical therapy!

In physical therapy we will be following a protocol provided by your surgeon; every protocol is different but you can expect to be with us for several months. We will work on your strength, range of motion, and flexibility to start with. As you progress and get stronger we will continue to work on these things while also working on your stability and agility. Your surgeon will be the person who can officially clear you to return to your sport, but we will be doing many activities and tests to prepare you to get back to it safely! We will also teach you ways to continue to stay strong after leaving us so that you can prevent re-injury in the future. Most athletes can expect to return to sport around the six month mark after surgery, but this varies from person to person.

### **Is there anything I can do to prevent this injury?**

Yes! There are many things you can do to prevent this and other knee injuries; first and foremost maintain a healthy lifestyle by staying active, eating well, and getting enough rest. Next, focus some time in your exercise routine on strengthening and stabilizing your legs and core. Remember, you are a whole person, not just a knee, so make sure you work on your ankles, knees, hips, and core in order to prevent an ACL tear. Every sport has different requirements and demands, so talk to your coach or athletic trainer about ways you can specifically prepare your body for your sport. Finally, if you have any specific concerns talk to a physical therapist about ways we can help and keep you in tip top shape!

Newest PT at PBCH

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