

## Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) Tear

An anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) tear is an injury to the knee commonly affecting soccer players, basketball players, skiers, gymnasts, and other athletes.

The ACL is one of the major ligaments (bands of tissue) connecting the thigh bone to the shin bone. It can tear if you:

- Twist your knee while keeping your foot planted on the ground
- Stop suddenly while running
- Suddenly shift your weight from one leg to the other
- Jump and land on an extended (straightened) knee
- Stretch the knee farther than you should
- Experience a direct hit to the knee

### HOW A PHYSICAL THERAPIST CAN HELP

Once an ACL tear has been diagnosed, you will work with your surgeon and physical therapist to decide if you should have surgery or if you can try to manage your recovery without surgery. If you don't have surgery, your therapist will work with you to restore your muscle strength, endurance, and coordination so that you can return to your regular activities. In some cases, the therapist may help you to learn to modify your physical activity so that you put less stress on your knee. If you decide to have surgery, your physical therapist can help you both before and after the procedure.



Women are  
**4-6 times**  
more likely than men to  
experience an ACL tear.

A physical therapy program  
lowered ACL injury rates by

**41%**  
for female soccer players,  
compared with players who  
only did a regular warm-up.