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Arundel Physical Therapy &  
Fitness

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### ***You will be at the top of my list***

*"I am happy to report that I am doing very well since completion of the PT and release by the surgeon. I have had no problems with the knee and even completed 4 softball practices (carefully of course) with no discomfort. Many thanks to you and your staff for your work with me. If I am in need of future PT services, you will be at the top of my list. Thanks again!"*

- Bill L.

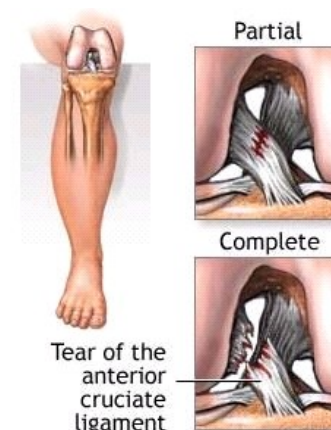


## **Twist and Shout: Suffering From An ACL Injury?**

If you're a sports fan, you've probably heard of ACL injuries but do you know how they are treated? In a nutshell, an ACL injury is a tear in the Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL), which is a ligament inside the knee that connects your upper leg and lower leg. It helps keep the knee stable. ACL injuries can range from minor injuries to complete tears, which can cause severe pain and immobility.

### **What causes ACL injuries?**

ACL injuries are common in contact sports, especially football and soccer. If your foot is planted on the ground and something causes your knee to bend backward, twist, or move from side to side, your ACL could tear. Jumping and other sudden movements can also damage the ACL. Therefore, skiers and runners are at risk for ACL tears too. An ACL tear can affect any athlete. In fact, the NASCAR title favorite Denny Hamlin tore his ACL playing baseball, as reported by the Associated Press on January 26, 2010.



Individuals who do not engage in contact sports could also suffer from an ACL injury as a result of falling off a ladder or twisting their knee while climbing stairs. As with the rest of our bodies, the ACL gets weaker and more prone to injury with age, making individuals over 40 at a greater risk for injury.

### **How will I know if I have an ACL injury?**

Typically, the first sign of an ACL injury is moderate to severe knee pain, but there are other symptoms as well:

- A popping noise or sensation in the knee when the injury happens
- Severe knee swelling within the first hour or two after the injury, which could indicate bleeding inside the knee
- The inability to move your knee because of the pain, swelling, or both
- An incredibly unstable feeling in your knee when you try to walk, or if it buckles or gives out on you

**Remember, don't let it go untreated.** If you do, you can cause more damage to your knee joint. So be sure to make an appointment with your doctor if you suspect an ACL injury.

## **Use RICE For Immediate Relief**

Starting first aid immediately after an ACL injury can minimize the extent of damage. The **RICE** method can work wonders to help reduce the swelling and pain associated with an ACL injury.

- **Rest** your knee. Don't try to walk if you can avoid it.
- Secondly, put **Ice** on your knee.



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- Then use an elastic bandage to apply **Compression** to the knee, being careful not to put it on so tightly that you restrict blood flow.
- Lastly, **Elevate** your leg above your heart. You can do this by lying down and propping your injured leg on a pillow or two (as you ice and compress it).



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### **Strengthen the Knee to Get Yourself Back on Track**

Depending on the extent of the injury, surgery may or may not be required. This is a decision you and your doctor will make together.

The primary role of physical therapy after an ACL injury is to return the injured knee to the same level of function as it was prior to the injury. With a multi-faceted approach geared towards optimum recovery, our rehabilitation professionals will get you back on your feet as soon as possible.



After a complete evaluation, we will often prescribe a comprehensive rehabilitation program consisting of:

- Flexibility routines
- Strengthening exercises
- Stabilization movements
- Endurance activities

Your physical therapist will work with you to determine the best plan of action, based on your activity level before the injury and the current functionality of your non-injured leg. By working closely with us, you might be able to strengthen the quadriceps and hamstring muscles that support your knee enough to avoid surgery and further injury. This varies from one case to another, but we can assure you we will go out of your way to minimize surgical involvement

We can help you experience both short-term relief and long-term recovery from your ACL injury. Please call us to schedule a consultation today. We also offer preventive strengthening programs to assist you or an athlete in your family to stabilize and strengthen the knee joint, minimizing the possibility of ACL injuries. After all, "Prevention is better than cure".

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