

Knee Injuries

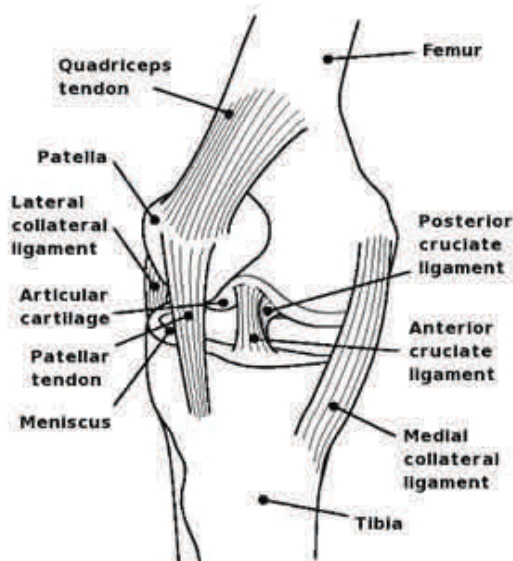
Understanding knee injuries

The knee has many soft tissues within and around the joint.

If the knee is subjected to abnormal forces such as twisting actions or bending sideways, these tissues may be damaged causing a sprain or tear.

This will lead to pain and variable amounts of swelling of the knee.

Your knee will usually require re-examination by your local doctor or an orthopaedic surgeon once the pain has settled. This helps to evaluate for major ligament injury.



lateral view of the knee

Know the facts

- Minor soft tissue injuries of the knee take between 3-6 weeks to heal properly.
- Particular knee muscles will 'switch off' when there is pain and swelling in the knee. Your exercises will help switch them on again.
- Regaining the correct walking technique early is very important for the function of your knee.

The first 48-72 hours

Initial treatment is based on the RICE principles

- **Rest** – avoid activities that cause pain. If you are unable to put weight on your leg comfortably, use crutches.
- **Ice** – apply to your knee intermittently for no longer than 20 minutes at a time. Use a damp cloth layer, such as a towel, between the ice and your skin. Commercially available ice packs work best as they mould to your skin.
- **Compression** – using a compression bandage/stocking during the day may help with discomfort.
- **Elevation** – when resting raise your leg (with pillows) above the level of your heart to minimise swelling.
- **Avoid 'HARM'** – Heat, Alcohol, Running/sport and Massage.

Tips to help your recovery

- Use walking aids/crutches as directed. Increase the weight you are putting through you knee gradually each day.
- Wear any prescribed braces or splints as directed. Only remove them to attend to personal hygiene.
- Take pain medication as instructed by your Emergency Department doctor and continue to speak with your local doctor or pharmacist about maintaining your pain relief.
- Go to appointments for any follow up that is required.

