



Anterior Cruciate Ligament Injuries

The anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) is located inside of the knee joint attaching from the tibia bone of the lower leg to the femur (thigh bone). The ACL is responsible for limiting forward movement of the tibia in relation to the femur. The ACL may be injured when the leg is forced beyond its normal range of movement, ex. forced extension due to a blow to the front of the leg, or forced flexion due to a blow from behind.

Treatment will initially consist of controlling the inflammation, stabilizing the area and encouraging the healing process using modalities such as ice, ultrasound, and acupuncture. Strengthening and functional exercises to stabilize the area will be added as appropriate. Recovery time will depend on the degree of damage done and the body's reaction. Surgical intervention may be required.

The therapeutic modalities commonly used include:

Ultrasound: uses sound waves and may be used to decrease scar tissue, increase blood flow, or decrease pain.

Interferential Current: uses electrical current to decrease pain, can also be used to elicit muscle contraction and decrease swelling.

Acupuncture: uses small, solid needles to encourage healing, reduce pain, and improve function of affected areas of the body.

What can you do at home?

Rest: by decreasing your activity you allow your body a chance to heal itself. When you start to feel better it is important to ease back into activities which might be aggravating. Listen to your body - pain means that you have done too much.

Ice: ice decreases the metabolism of your cells so that they do not die despite a decrease in oxygen to the injured area. Ice should be kept on for approximately 15 minutes, several times a day. The injured area should be elevated (above the level of your heart) at the same time. Use a wet towel between the ice and your skin to protect against frostbite. You can use frozen veggies, cold packs, or real ice.