



WHAT IS A TORN ACL AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

By Juliane Kristine Morris



Gary Dragon, Jr. has 22 years of experience as a physical therapist and opened Action Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine in July of 2005. Gary received his bachelor's degree in Kinesiology while working as a student trainer for LSU football, baseball and women's soccer teams. He then went on to receive a master's and doctorate degree in physical therapy from the University of St. Augustine. While being a certified manual therapist providing one-on-one hands-on physical therapy, he also specializes in the rehabilitation of orthopedic and sports related injuries.

You may have heard a sports commentator mention an athlete's ACL injury or maybe you've heard a friend say that they've torn their ACL. What is a torn ACL and what can help to prevent or heal it?

An ACL injury is a sprain or tear of the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) which helps connect the thigh bone (femur) to the shinbone (tibia), and helps stabilize the knee joint. The ACL is one of your body's strong bands of connective tissue. When the ACL is torn with sudden changes in direction, pressure or stopping and starting, there can be an ACL tear that feels like (and is sometimes heard as) a pop, followed by pain, instability and sometimes swelling. An ACL injury can make it painful or impossible to bear weight.

And while sports like football, basketball, soccer, tennis and downhill skiing are among the most ACL-injury-prone sports, sometimes normal activities like carrying a laundry basket up a stairwell, walking at the office and turning sharply, landing awkwardly from a step or jump, dancing, or pivoting with a foot firmly planted can result in a torn ACL.

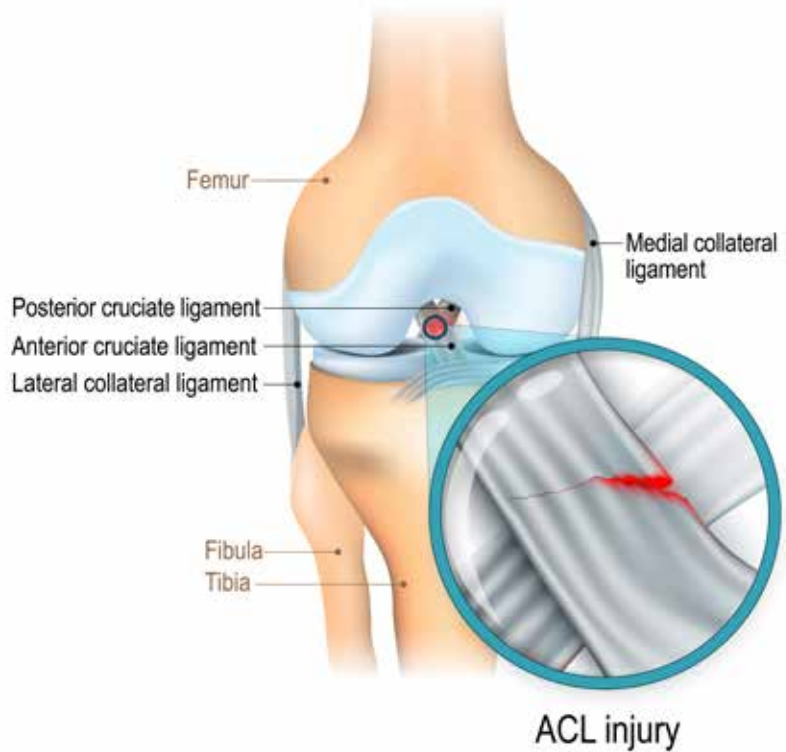
If an ACL ligament is damaged, the tear is either partial or complete, where a mild ACL injury may leave the ligament intact but stretched. A physician can diagnose an ACL injury, and to regain stability and strength will prescribe rest and rehabilitation exercises depending on the severity of an ACL injury. Sometimes, surgery is needed to replace the torn ligament, followed by exercises and physical therapy.

Anterior cruciate ligament injury

AN ACL INJURY TREATMENT PLAN OFTEN INCLUDES:

- Pain management with ice, electric stimulation and massage.
- Gait training to help with crutches
- Swelling management with R.I.C.E. (rest, ice, compression and elevation)
- Range of motion exercises
- Balance exercises. A physical therapist often works to help improve the quadriceps, the muscle on top of the thigh, with strengthening exercises, and sometimes working to strengthen the hamstrings and hip muscles.

A physical therapist helps demonstrate that proper exercise mechanism and body training helps reduce the risk of an ACL injury. Having a strong core, overall balance in leg muscle strength and using proper positioning of the knees when moving, pivoting, bending, jumping, landing and stopping helps prevent ACL injuries.



ACL Rehab

Weak knees are, logically, much easier to seriously injure. The stronger your knees are, the better they absorb shock, protecting them from injury. Every time you engage in knee-strengthening exercises, you are investing in your knees' future, ensuring that they will last for decades to come. Try these exercises to keep your knees in the best shape possible.

**Please consult a medical professional before beginning any exercise program.*



PELVIC RAISE

Start with your buttocks touching the ground and slowly raise your pelvis up as high as you can. Hold the up position for 3 seconds. Repeat the exercise for a duration of 30 seconds.

WALKING LUNGES

Stand with your legs hip width apart, step forward into a lunge position. Repeat on each side as you walk forward. Lunge straight down while not allowing your knee to extend passed your toes.



STEP UPS


You will need a step that is at least 8 inches or higher for this exercise. Using the step, step up with one leg then continuing stepping alternating each leg for 30 seconds.



SIDE LEG RAISES

Start by lying on your side. Raise your top leg up as high as you can. Always use slow and controlled movements. Repeat for 30 seconds. Switch to the other side.





WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM PHYSICAL THERAPY

By Juliane Kristine Morris

For those who have never been to physical therapy, not knowing what to expect can feel a little uncomfortable. Let's clarify what to expect with physical therapy.

As one of the medical treatment branches of rehabilitative healthcare to treat body function and movement problems, Physical Therapists (PTs) are highly trained, medically licensed professionals who treat conditions and diseases by using medically engineered equipment and carefully crafted patient exercise programs, identifying root causes and treating them with biomechanical therapies and exercise. Most patients benefit from their prescribed physical therapy sessions to help them cope with, manage or help overcome an injury, disease or disability, or post-operative state.

When a physician prescribes physical therapy to a patient, in the first session, the PT evaluates the patient's condition, measuring range of motion, posture, flexibility, strength and muscle and joint ability. This allows the PT to determine the most appropriate treatment, as well as the duration of the therapy sessions. The treatment plan may take days, weeks or months. Physical therapy can help improve,

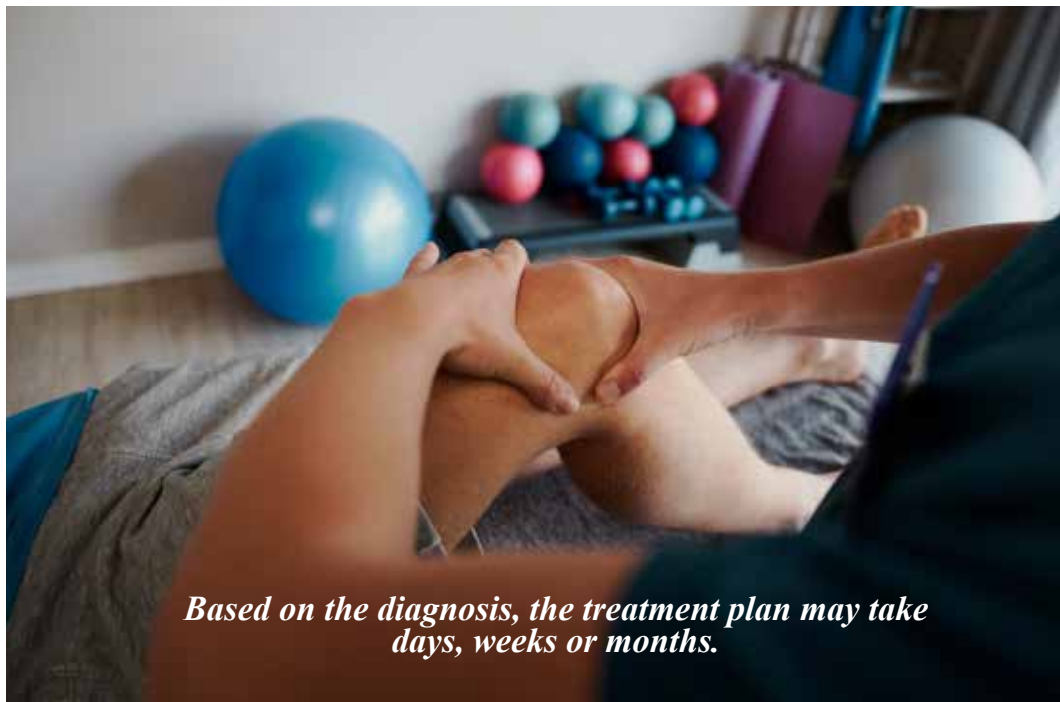
or in some cases, restore your mobility and range of motion, strength or balance.

The final stage of physical therapy is self-management, which is prescribed when the issue is resolved or has reached a best state of improvement or plateau.

Sessions with licensed physical therapists can occur at home, rehab centers, hospitals, schools, fitness centers, sports facilities and of course in PT offices. Because physical therapists work with other medical teams,

their work with patients can address an array of sport or accidental injuries, musculoskeletal disorders, neurological disorders, genetic conditions and even help with managing vertigo or dizziness to keep patients safe and functional.

Knowing what to expect from physical therapy is half the battle. Get back to your limber, productive, functioning self by staying positive and attending your sessions.



Based on the diagnosis, the treatment plan may take days, weeks or months.



PHYSICAL THERAPY & SPORTS MEDICINE

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Employee Spotlight



Casie Doucet has 10 years of experience in the field of physical medicine. Casie received her bachelor's degree in Exercise Science with a minor in Nutrition and a concentration in Health Promotion from McNeese State University in 2015. While attending college, she worked as a personal trainer, athletic trainer, and private coach.

With her coaching certification, she instructed athletes to state competitions for track, softball and Olympic weightlifting. Casie is currently continuing her education for medical coding for physical medicine and has plans to become a Physical Therapy Assistant in the future.



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