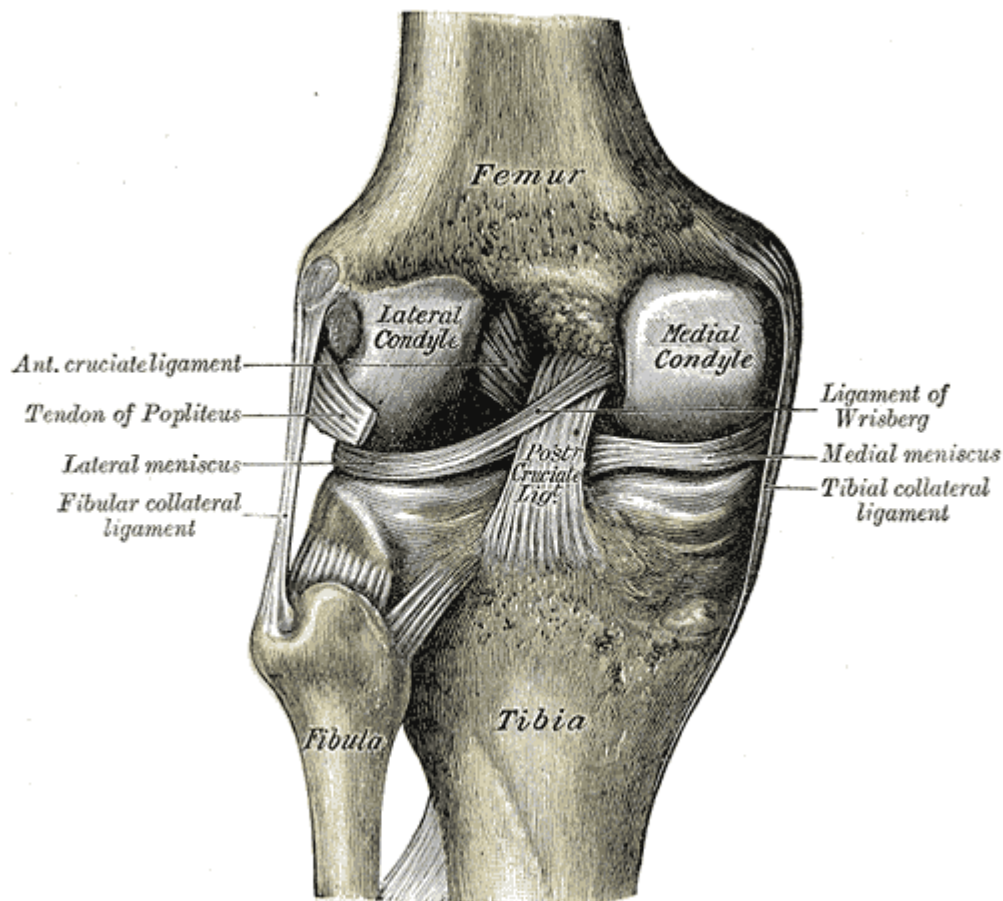


Acute Meniscal Injury

Menisci are the cartilage disks that are found in our knees. There are two in each knee (one lateral and one medial) which act as shock absorbers and cushions to minimise the stress on the articular cartilage, which cover the ends of our bones.



There are two different ways which we can develop problems with our menisci. One is an acute injury where a sudden high load or force causes a tear across the meniscus, such as might happen with a sports injury. The other is known as a degenerative meniscus injury which is a more gradual onset. We are looking at an acute meniscal injury here but if you feel you have a degenerative meniscal injury please click [here](#).

Acute meniscus injuries often happen during sports. Players may squat and twist the knee, causing an injury. Direct contact such as a rugby or football tackle is sometimes involved.

The most common symptoms of meniscus tear are:

- Pain
- Stiffness and swelling
- Catching or locking of your knee

- The sensation of your knee "giving way"
- You are not able to move your knee through its full range of motion

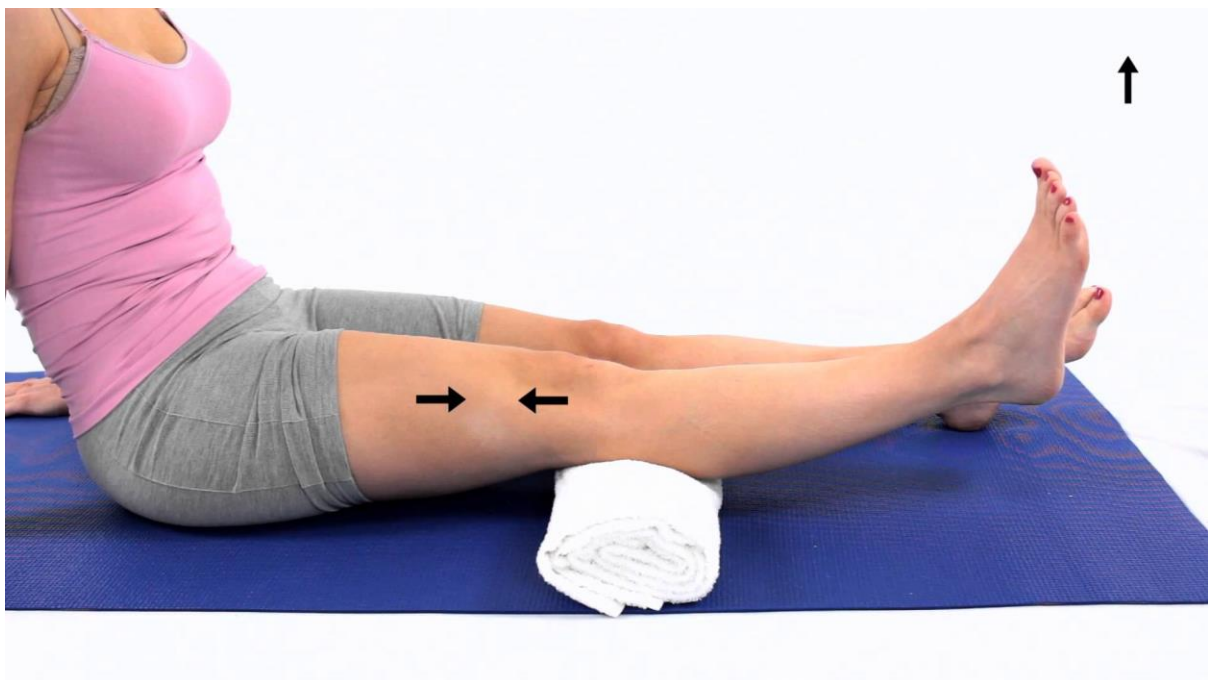
Most people can still walk on their injured knee and many athletes keep playing with a tear. However you may find your knee becomes progressively more stiff and swollen over the next few days.

Treatment

Initial treatment after an acute injury involves the **RICE** principle. For more detailed information visit our acute soft tissue injury page [here](#).

- Rest the affected area for at least the first 48 hours. You may require crutches to avoid putting weight on your leg.
- Ice can help to reduced swelling and inflammation. Only use for 20 minutes at a time but do not apply ice directly to the skin.
- Compression can help to prevent additional swelling. Wear an elastic compression bandage and remove for sleeping.
- Elevation can help to reduce swelling. Recline when you rest, and put your leg up higher than your heart.

If after the initial swelling and inflammation is settled and you are still having problems with your knee giving way or feeling unstable you may want to try some basic strengthening exercises. Often after an injury to the knee the quadriceps muscle becomes a little weaker and can be responsible for ongoing symptoms. The following exercise is useful for switching this important muscle group back on:



- Place a rolled up towel under your knee
- Tighten your quadriceps (front thigh muscle) and use it to straighten your knee
- Your heel should lift away from the floor
- Hold for 10 seconds and then slowly relax.
- Repeat up to 10 times

If your symptoms are persisting, ask your GP for a referral to physiotherapy or visit our website and refer yourself.