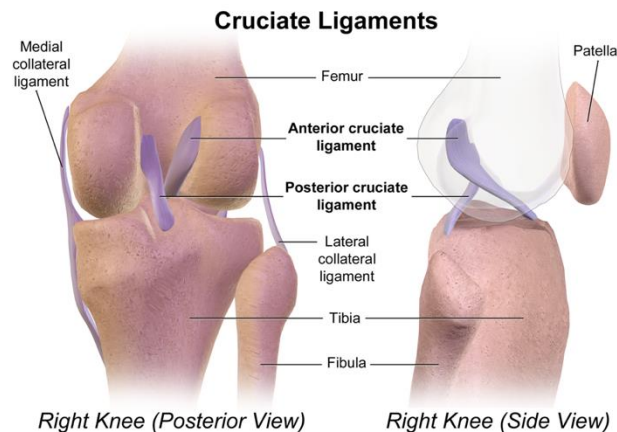


Have you torn or strained a ligament in your knee? How to tell.

There are four main ligaments in your knee. Ligaments are strong bands of tissue that connect one bone to another. In the knee they connect the bone above your knee to one of the two bones below your knee. These four ligaments help stabilize your knee joint.



Common ways the ligaments get strained, stretched, partially torn, or completely torn (often during sports):

1. Suddenly changing direction (cutting) or slowing down
2. Landing incorrectly or awkwardly from a jump
3. Sudden stop
4. Pivoting on your knee with your foot firmly planted
5. A direct blow or collision to the knee (example-football tackle)

Indications you may have a torn or strained ligament in your knee:

1. Sudden and severe pain
2. A loud popping or snapping sound during the injury
3. Rapid swelling within the first 24 hours
4. The knee feels loose or unstable
5. Unable to put weight on joint-painful or gives way
6. A loss of motion in the knee

With these indicators one should see a physician.

Tests they may do to check the integrity of the ligaments:

1. Anterior drawer for ACL ligament (Anterior Cruciate Ligament):
 - a. Lie on back and bend the knee to 45 degrees. Grab the tibia and fibula with the fingers above the joint line. Pull in an explosive manner. Compare side to side. Laxity may indicate a strain or tear.



2. Posterior drawer for PCL ligament (Posterior Cruciate Ligament):
 - a. Lie on back and bend the knee to 45 degrees. Grab the tibia and fibula with the fingers above the joint line. Push in an explosive manner. Compare side to side. Laxity may indicate a strain or tear.



3. Valgus Test for MCL (Medial Collateral Ligament):

- a. Lie on back – perform with knee straight and at 20-30 degrees. Grab inside part of ankle and place other hand on outside thigh. Turn lower leg slightly outward - external rotation. Bring lower leg out into abduction. A feeling the joint may be gapping is a sign ligament may be stretched or torn. Compare to other side.



4. Varus Test for LCL (Lateral Collateral Ligament):

- a. Lie on back – perform with knee straight and at 20-30 degrees. Grab outside part of ankle and place other hand on inside thigh. Turn lower leg slightly outward- external rotation. Bring lower leg in toward the other leg. A feeling the joint may be gapping is a sign ligament may be stretched or torn. Compare to other side.

