



Dr Stuart MacKenzie



ACL (Anterior Cruciate Ligament) Reconstruction Explained

UNDERSTANDING THE ACL RECONSTRUCTION PROCESS

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ACL (Anterior Cruciate Ligament) Reconstruction Explained

What is the ACL?

The ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) is one of the 4 main ligaments in the knee joint. It holds the femur (thigh bone) stable on the tibia (shin bone).

What does a torn ACL mean for me?

Having a torn or ruptured ACL means that your knee is going to be less stable. Depending on what your job is and what activities you do this may not be a major problem.

If you are more active or have a physical job it may mean that you can't trust your knee and it may give way under you. Some people find that their knee gives way during ordinary daily activities such as walking up or down stairs.

How do you fix a torn ACL?

When the ACL is torn it usually stretches first. This means that in the vast majority of cases the ACL can't be repaired. Instead it has to be replaced. This is known as an ACL reconstruction.

The ACL reconstruction usually uses one or two of your own ligaments to replace the torn ACL. This tendon (called a graft) is usually taken from the same leg that is being fixed.

The tendon graft is attached to the bone inside the knee so that it sits in the same position that your own ACL used to sit. The tendon graft is firmly secured into small tunnels in the bone.

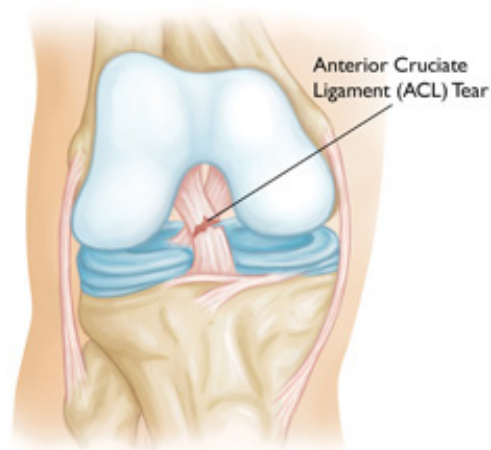
ACL reconstruction surgery is done using arthroscopy which is sometimes known as keyhole surgery.

How long does the surgery take to get over?

Most patients stay in hospital overnight following their ACL surgery and go home the next morning. You will have crutches to help you walk but most patients are walking without needing these after about 2 weeks.

In fact most patients are feeling pretty good after 2 – 3 weeks. It is important not to overdo things though as it is easy to re-injure your ACL during the early stages after surgery.

Your surgeon and physiotherapist will advise you on what you can and can't do as you progress through your recovery. It will usually be 6 – 12 months before you can return to sport.



FIND OUT HOW ACL RECONSTRUCTION CAN BENEFIT YOU

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