

KNEE INJURIES

PART 3

POSTERIOR CRUCIATE LIGAMENT TEAR

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This ligament is seated deep in the knee joint and is responsible for stability of the knee. The posterior cruciate ligament is prone to injury when a blow strikes the lower leg while the knee is in a flexed position, as is the case when the athlete falls forward on a flexed knee or when the knee strikes the dashboard in an auto accident. This ligament can also be torn in instances where the knee is hyperextended.

The knee joint usually will not swell with injury of the posterior cruciate ligament. There is often pain and tenderness in the back of the knee.

Care for the acute, non-operative posterior cruciated tear should include an external splint, with early weight bearing assisted by crutches. Early range of motion movement will help speed healing and prevent muscle wasting. Isometric exercises for the quads will promote toning of the muscles until pain-free motion allows resisted exercises.

Strengthening the quadriceps provides muscular support which is important to restoring knee stability after the injury. As strength once again becomes equal in both legs progressive functional activities may begin with the protection of an external support.

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