

Collateral Ligament Sprains

The medial collateral ligament (MCL) is located on the inside or medial aspect of the knee (Fig 1). It is commonly injured in contact sports from a blow to the outside of the knee. The lateral collateral ligament (LCL) is located on the outside or lateral aspect of the knee (Fig.2). It is not as frequently sprained as the MCL, but can be injured when a force is applied to the inside of the knee. Isolated sprains may occur to either ligament, but other knee joint structures can be injured at the same time as the MCL or LCL.

Treatment and rehabilitation of MCL or LCL sprains

Day 1–3

- **Rest**—Decrease or eliminate activity
- **Ice**—Apply ice for 15–20 minutes several times each day
- **Compression**—Use an elastic bandage to control swelling. Start at mid-calf and wrap upward to the thigh
- **Elevation**—Elevate the injured limb higher than heart level to assist the removal of swelling
- Crutches with partial weight bearing are indicated if the athlete cannot walk without pain or a limp
- A knee immobilizer if indicated for comfort

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- **Quad sets:** 4 sets of 25, 2–3 times per day. **Straight leg raises:** 4 sets of 25, 2–3 times per day

Day 4–7

- Cold whirlpool and range of motion (biking motion while in the water) may be used at day 5–6 if swelling has decreased for two consecutive days
- Continue compression and elevation for swelling
- Continue quad sets and straight leg raises

Day 8 (if 90 degrees of knee flexion is present)

- Continue warm whirlpool and range of motion
- Begin exercise bike or swimming (kicks) 15–20 minutes
- Exercises:
 - Continue quad sets and straight leg raises

- Begin leg extensions, 4 sets of 15
- Leg curl, 4 sets of 15
- Leg press, 3 sets of 10–15

- Ice and compression after exercise

Day 14 (If full range of motion is present)

- Continue:
 - Whirlpool
 - Exercise bike/pool
 - Strengthening exercises, increase weight and lower to 8–10 reps for leg extension, leg curls and leg press
- Begin running program
- Ice after activity

To return to participation you must have

- Full range of motion
- No pain
- No swelling
- Completed the entire prescribed running program

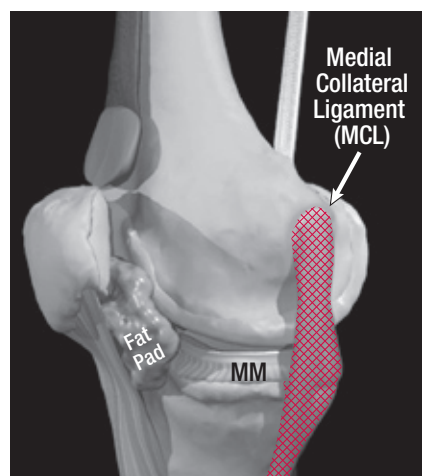


Figure 1

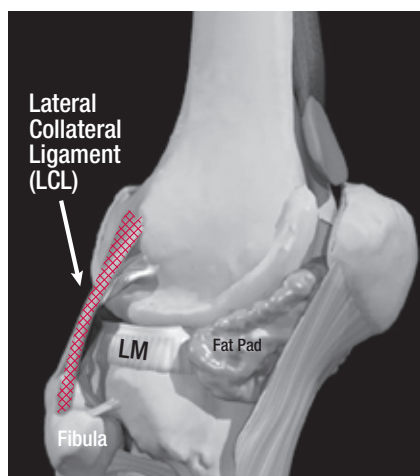


Figure 2

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