PETTYGROVE PHYSICAL THERAPY &
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Common Cycling Injuries

Whether you are a competitive cyclist or a recreational rider, having your bike properly fit for you is essential for preventing an injury. Being fit properly on your bike will provide optimal comfort and make you a more efficient cyclist.

Below are two common complaints that riders experience and adjustments you can make to ensure a proper bike fit and decrease risk of an injury:

Knee Pain
Causes: Seat is too far forward. Overtraining—too much, too soon. Weakness and poor flexibility of hips and legs.

Treatment: Make sure saddle height creates a slight bend in your knee (10°–15°) at bottom of your stroke. Increase time, distance, and hill training on your bike with a graded progression. Address saddle height and distance from handlebars. Stretch hamstrings, iliotibial band (IT Band), quads, and hip flexors. Start a strengthening program for legs/core.

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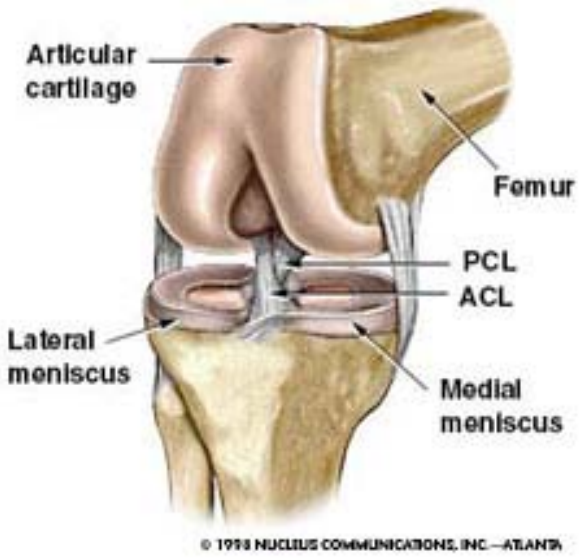
Meniscus Tears: What is it? What do I do after injury?

What is a meniscus?

The meniscus is a "C" shaped, shock absorbing cartilage between the thigh bone (femur) and shin bone (tibia). Your knee has two menisci; the inside one is called the *medial meniscus*, the outside one is called the *lateral meniscus*. Not only do the menisci buffer and evenly distribute the load in your knee, but they also provide some stability to the joint.



Unfortunately, the menisci do not have a good blood supply except for the periphery where it attaches to the knee lining. The poor blood supply makes it unable to heal itself. If the tear is on the periphery, it may heal with reattachment and time; however, most tears do not heal independently.

How do you tear your meniscus?

The typical mechanism of injury is sudden impact to the knee such as a twisting injury or hyperflexion to the knee. For example, being side-swiped in soccer or twisting your knee while hiking a rocky trail may cause sufficient stress to produce a meniscal tear.

With age, the meniscus and other cartilagenous structures become less pliable and less elastic; hence, simply squatting too deep to reach under your desk may stress or tear your meniscus.

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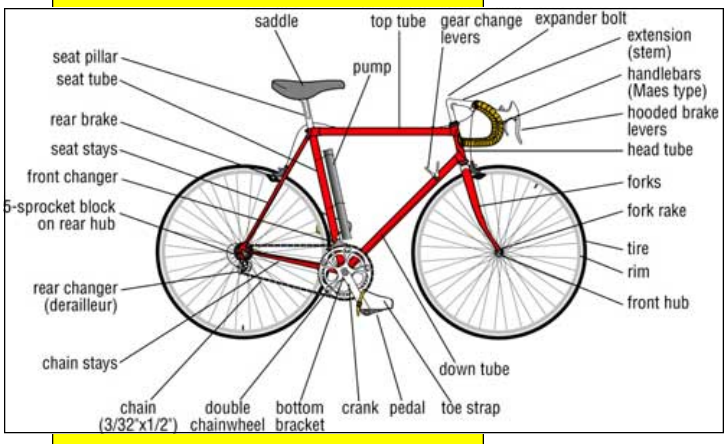
(Cycling Injuries . . .continued)

Back Pain

Causes: Seat too high, too far back, or tilted down or up. Stem is too short (handlebars). Handlebars are rolled down or are uneven. Tight hips and low back muscles. Too much time spent in flexed position (bent over).

Treatment: Adjust seat, handlebars, hoods, and stem height. Sit up more on your rides and try arching your back. Stretch hamstrings, low back, hip flexors, and hips. Strengthen core and hip muscles.

*If you start to experience numbness in your hips or legs or have a history of disc problems, please consult a physician or physical therapist.



Don't let an injury hamper your cycling this spring. If pain is limiting your cycling, seek help before pain sidelines you. In addition, take your bike to a reputable bike shop for a tune up before you hit the road.

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What are signs and symptoms of a meniscus tear?

As stated previously, you may feel a "pop" upon injury and feel discomfort along your knee joint line. Swelling may occur in the knee causing your knee to feel stiff and create a limp while walking. Certain tears may limit you from fully straightening your knee and making it feel as if it is "locked". It also may "catch" at certain ranges when you try to bend and/or straighten your knee.

What can I do after I injure my knee?

Prompt medial attention to properly diagnose your injury is important for returning to a normal lifestyle as quickly as possible.

It is crucial after injury to control the swelling and restore motion of your knee whether or not surgery is required. Consistent gentle range of motion exercises are necessary to relieve the soreness and stiffness that is present after injury. RICE (**R**est, **I**ce, **C**ompression, and **E**levation) will help diminish the swelling. In addition, a strengthening program that does not irritate your joint is beneficial to provide additional control and stability in order to protect the knee. A focused strengthening program should include exercises for your quadriceps (front of thigh), hamstrings (back of thigh), and calf muscles.

Whether you are struggling with a chronic or a recent injury, you may benefit from seeking medical advice. If you are experiencing pain before, during, or after exercise/activity, it may be time to have your condition assessed by a sports medicine or orthopedic physician and/or physical therapist . The clinicians at Pettygrove Physical Therapy & Sports Rehabilitation would like to help you get back in condition and play pain free.

Pettygrove Physical Therapy & Sports Rehabilitation is conveniently located in Northwest Portland on the fourth floor of the Northwest Center for Orthopedics and Rehabilitation building at 1515 N.W. 18th Avenue, Suite 400, Portland, Oregon, 97209.

Hours of Operation:
Monday-Thursday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Friday 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
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