



connections
PHYSICAL THERAPY

NEWSLETTER

HOW PHYSICAL THERAPY CAN HELP AFTER ACL SURGERY



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HOW PHYSICAL THERAPY CAN HELP AFTER ACL SURGERY

ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) injuries can be excruciatingly painful, regardless of how they are sustained! Have you injured your ACL or had surgery to repair? At Connections Physical Therapy, our physical therapists are experts at ACL rehabilitation. We can guide you through the necessary steps to resume your normal activities and resume sports without limitations!

The vast majority of functions you need to perform each day, including getting out of bed, bending down to empty the dishwasher, crouching to tie your shoe, or going up and down the stairs, are only possible when your knees are functioning correctly.

The knee is also responsible for complex movements that are needed for sports participation. The ACL ligament plays a significant role in everyday movements and advanced agility and sports-specific movements.

That's why it is so important to seek the help of a physical therapist following an ACL injury and subsequent repair. This is a major surgery that can significantly affect your way of life. Fortunately, at Connections Physical Therapy, our licensed and experienced physical therapists can help you move freely once again!

What To Expect After ACL Surgery

The anterior cruciate ligament is one of the ligaments in the knee joint. Ligaments are a tough band of tissue that attach one bone

to the next. The ACL connects the bottom of the thigh bone to the top of the shinbone. The primary function of the ACL is to help keep the knee stable.

When the anterior cruciate ligament tears, it typically happens from a sudden stop, twist, or change in motion. Often a torn ACL leads to significant swelling, loss of motion, and it may make you feel as if you can't put any weight on your leg at all.

This ligament is crucial to how the knee functions with everyday activities and advanced sports participation. Post-surgical rehabilitation is essential for your recovery and return to everyday life.

Rehabilitation following ACL reconstructive surgery typically requires approximately 6-9 months for normal daily activities and at least a year for safe return to sports. Extensive physical therapy and hard work are the cornerstones to a successful outcome.

We understand that this can be physically, mentally, and emotionally challenging for an individual. There are a lot of ups and downs to the rehab process. For some, the struggle is being sidelined for as long as a year. For others, it is the physical grind to recover your pre-injury abilities.

At Connections Physical Therapy, we will work hard to make your rehabilitation process as smooth as possible, so you can get back to playing the sport you love.

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What To Expect With Post-Surgical Physical Therapy



Establishing clear task-based progressions will provide structure and motivation for your rehabilitation after ACL surgery. Our team of physical therapists is experts at designing evidence-based programs founded on principles of success!

We will start with a post-surgical evaluation to identify all the factors contributing to your current level of impairment and dysfunction. This will consist of a thorough history to understand more about your typical training/exercise schedule, the demands on the body, and your overall health status.

Once we have gathered this information, our therapists will develop a comprehensive program that includes targeted manual techniques, mobility work, strengthening, and any appropriate pain relief technique for the early stages of recovery.

The second phase of your rehabilitation will progress your strength and dynamic stability to restore function and prevent injuries. We will also incorporate balance and coordination exercises to stimulate the nervous system and help ensure your knee can tolerate stopping and changing directions. We will teach you how to jump and land in the correct positions to avoid an injury in the future.

Your physical therapist will then incorporate activity and sport-specific treatments with a “return to activity/sport” progression to assist you in a safe return to training and sports participation. Our goal is to achieve optimal and symmetrical movement quality.

Our progressions are based on:

- Respecting your joint
- The strength of your entire lower extremity and core
- Your movement quality
- Your overall tolerance to exercise.

Don't let your ACL injury hinder your life or take you out of the game for good - regain your function and get back to the sport you love with physical therapy!

Contact Us Today!

At Connections Physical Therapy, we will get you set up on a treatment plan following your surgery so you can begin your recovery process as soon as possible. Our expert physical therapists will also help you learn methods and techniques for protecting your knees in the future to prevent further pain or injury.

Have you injured your ACL? Call today to schedule an appointment with our team!

Sources:

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EXERCISE ESSENTIAL

QUAD SET

While lying or sitting with a small towel rolled under your ankle, tighten your top thigh muscle to press the back of your knee downward towards the ground.

*This exercise is designed for pain prevention.
Call your therapist if you are experiencing any pain!*



4 Health Benefits of Spring Cleaning!



1. Allergy Symptom Reduction.

A thorough cleaning can greatly reduce the amount of dust in your home, which is helpful considering dust mite allergies are the number one cause of bronchial asthma in the world. About 2.3 million Americans have been diagnosed with asthma. A 2014 study found that cleaning and decluttering your home can help you avoid allergy symptoms and make you feel more healthy.

2. Cleanliness Produces Happiness.

Maybe you don't enjoy the process of cleaning, but the end result will leave you smiling. A 2010 study found that having a clean home can improve your mood and reduce your risk of depression. Studies also show that doing housework for 20 minutes can reduce stress and anxiety by up to 20 percent.

3. Better Heart Health.

If you're looking for an easy way to support your heart health, just 30 minutes per day of light exercise (including low-intensity physical activities like household chores, vacuuming, mopping, and scrubbing floors) can decrease your risk of heart disease by 24 percent.

4. Declutter and Do a Good Deed by Donating.

An essential part of a successful spring cleaning is getting rid of old items that are no longer used or worn. Apply the rule of thumb that if you haven't made use of something in a year, it's time for it to go. Fill bags and boxes of things, then donate them to a local charity so they can still be beneficial to someone else. Giving to others is an act that is associated with greater self-esteem, lower stress levels, and overall happiness.

Sources:
[ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19934011](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19934011)
parsleyhealth.com/blog/health-benefits-spring-cleaning

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

MELISSA WALSH | PT, DPT



Melissa graduated from UMass Amherst in 2012 with a Bachelors of Science in Kinesiology and went on to receive her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences University (MCPHS) in Worcester in 2016. Melissa joined our Leominster Connections team in 2019 to ensure she brings the highest caliber of care to her patients in the greater Leominster area. With a mix of manual therapy and progressive

functional strengthening, she focuses on each patient's needs and goals. She loves to help her patients succeed in returning to the highest level of activity they can achieve. Melissa is also certified in Instrument Assisted Soft Tissue Mobilization and Cupping (IASTM). In her free time, she loves to work out, hike and go camping with her family!

Melissa does not only treat the patient's symptoms but also treats the origin of the pain using a full body approach. This allows her to teach the patient how to prevent re-injury and also how to rehab independently which gives the patient control over their pain. She sees many sports injuries and enjoys being a part of the ACL repair recovery process. Protocols for ACL rehabilitation generally include:

- Improving range of motion and weaning from braces and assisted devices
- Improving hip/knee/ankle strength as well as balance/stability
- Progression into return to sport which includes building confidence in the patient to use their surgical leg during higher level activities like jumping, running and cutting

Melissa's favorite part of the ACL rehab is the return to sport and confidence building stage. This is so important before the patient returns back to full sport to reduce the risk of re-injury and allow the athlete to focus on the game and not their injury!



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