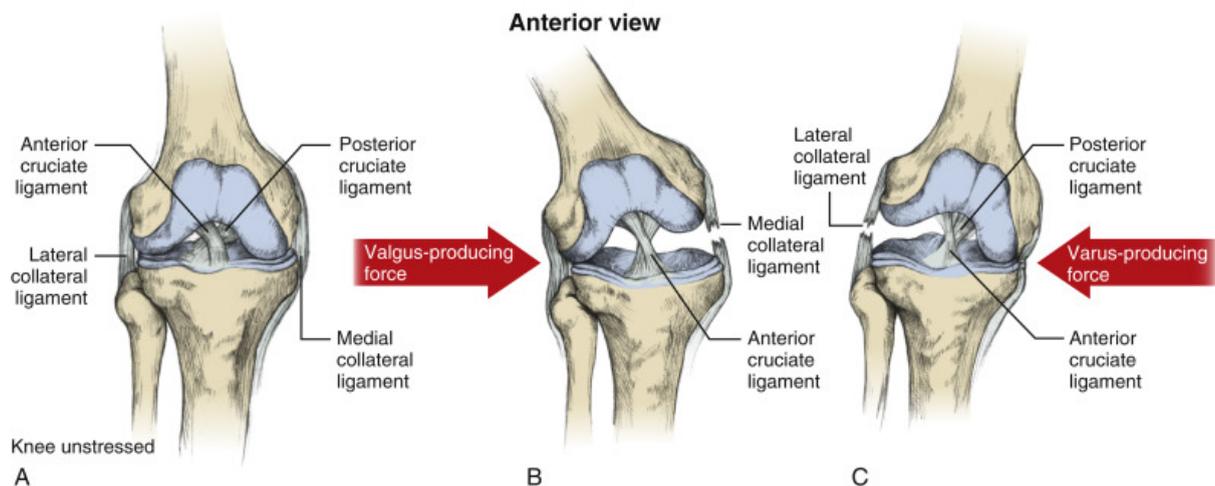


How to treat an MCL Injury



OVENS VALLEY
PHYSIO & PILATES

- A Medial Collateral Ligament (MCL) injury occurs when the joint is **stretched past its normal range of movement** causing damage to the ligament
- Usually an valgus mechanism occurs where then knee collapses inwards
- An MCL injury can occur in isolation or in combination with other knee injuries such as; an ACL tear, LCL tear, PCL tear, PLC tear, meniscus tear, bone bruising and bone fracture.
- Most MCL injuries are non contact injuries and **can be prevented through specific prevention exercises.**



How bad is my MCL injury?

Ligament injuries as graded on a scale from 1-3:

- **Grade 1** represents a microscopic injury without stretching of the ligament on a macroscopic level.
- **Grade 2** has macroscopic stretching, but the ligament remains intact.
- **Grade 3** is a complete rupture of the ligament.

This can be **assessed through clinical tests** and sometimes imaging such as ultrasound or MRI is required. It is important to note that **pain is not always proportionate to the severity of injury**. It is possible to have a very painful injury with minimal damage or the other way around. Also, the grade of tearing is **less important compared to functional stability**. There are many high level athletes that have grade 3 ligament tears that perform at a very high level.

How long will it take?

- Depending on the severity of the injury, **ligaments take 6-12 weeks to fully recover**.
- **BUT functional stability and enough loading is more important** than time so we use functional measures to guide return to sports rather than just time.
- Surgery is not usually required even with a complete tear as it will heal with bracing (hinged knee brace- HKB)

	Week 0-1	Week 1-2	Week 3-6	Week 6-12
Grade 1	HKB 20-140	HKB 10-140	Return to training	Return to play
	Week 0-4	Week 4-6	Week 6-8	Week 8-12
Grade 2	HKB 30-90	Full ROM + strength	Return to training	Return to play
	Week 0-4	Week 4-6	Week 6-8	Week 8-12
Grade 3	HKB 30-90 crutches	HKB 0-120	Full ROM + strength	Return to training

What do I need to do before I return to sport?

Recurrence rates of MCL injuries in sport is high and one of the **biggest risk factors for injury is previous injury**. To minimise this risk it is essential to complete **a full and comprehensive rehab** specific to your sporting demands. This includes:

- Gradually loading up the knee and restoring full range of movement in the early phases
- Completing a tailored strength program **targeting complementary muscles** that help support the injured knee
- Retraining balance and proprioception with progressively challenging drills
- Progressively working towards **power and plyometric training**
- Resuming sport specific activities and **building up load tolerance and training volume**
- Return to **higher level sport specific activities** that challenge the injured muscle (eg. sprinting)
- Resume **full training** before returning to full competition