

Women's Knee Health Guide: Preventing ACL and Overuse Injuries



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Stay strong. Stay active. Protect your knees.

Women experience knee injuries, especially ACL tears, at significantly higher rates than men. Whether you're a runner, soccer player, weekend warrior or simply staying active, understanding why these injuries happen and how to prevent them can keep you strong, confident and doing what you love.



Why women are at higher risk for knee injuries

Multiple factors contribute to the higher rate of ACL injuries in women:



Anatomy and alignment

Women often have a wider pelvis, creating a larger "Q-angle" that affects knee alignment. This can increase strain on the ACL during pivoting, landing or cutting movements.



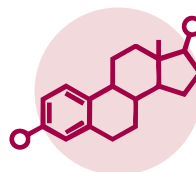
Strength and stability variations

Core, glute and hip stabilizer muscles play a huge role in controlling knee movement. Weakness in these areas can allow the knee to collapse inward, a major risk factor for ACL tears.



Neuromuscular control differences

Women tend to rely more on their quadriceps than hamstrings during landing. This imbalance may place extra force on the ACL.



Hormonal influence

Fluctuations in estrogen during menstruation, pregnancy or menopause can temporarily affect ligament laxity.

Strengthening exercises that protect your knees

Build these exercises into your warm-up or training program two to three times per week. You can also do them by themselves to improve strength.



Hip & glute

- Glute bridges
- Clamshells or banded lateral walks



Hamstring

- Nordic hamstring curls
- Romanian deadlifts



Core & pelvic stability

- Side planks
- Dead bugs or bird dogs



Dynamic control & landing mechanics

- Jump-to-squat landing drills
- Single-leg hops with controlled landing



Flexibility & mobility

- Hip flexor stretches
- Calf and quad mobility



When to seek care

Early evaluation can prevent small issues from becoming long-term injuries. Reach out to a women's sports medicine specialist if you experience:

- Persistent knee pain that lasts more than a few days
- Pain during running, pivoting, jumping or landing
- Recurrent swelling or stiffness
- A "pop" followed by instability or difficulty bearing weight
- Feeling like your knee "gives out"
- Decreased performance or pain that affects daily activities



Why choose Loyola Medicine?

Our team at Loyola Medicine specializes in caring for active women and female athletes at every level. From high school competitors to marathon runner, we help women stay active throughout every phase of life.

How balanced is your body?

Scan the QR code to take our mobility quiz, find imbalances and request an appointment.



Learn more at [loyolamedicine.org/WomensSportsMedicine](https://www.loyolamedicine.org/WomensSportsMedicine)



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