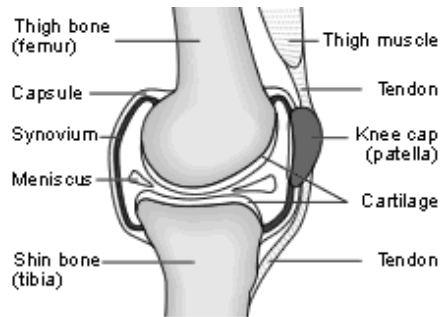


# KNEE PAIN

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The menisci are structures that fill the space between the femur (the large bone of the upper thigh) and the tibia (the shin bone). They are made of a tissue like cartilage. There is a lateral meniscus on the outside of the knee and a medial meniscus on the inside of the knee and they are both attached to the tibia.

Menisci act as shock absorbers in the knee joint. Specific movements or positions of the knee will stress either the lateral or the medial meniscus. If these movements are taken to the extreme of the range with force the meniscus can be torn or irritated.



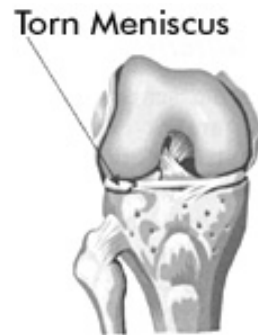
## CAUSES

Meniscal injuries can happen in a variety of different ways. However, the position of injury is usually a forceful twisting inward while the knee is flexed and the foot is planted.

These injuries are common amongst the athletic population especially if the athlete is involved in a contact sport such as

wrestling, or football or sports which involve a lot of running on a field, such as soccer or Ultimate Frisbee.

The damage can be caused by less forceful twisting movements in older people. As we age, the flexibility of the meniscus decreases. Also, most people have done a lot of activity over the years, and possibly have had previous injuries, especially people who were involved in rougher sports when they were younger. These factors can add up to cause a meniscus injury during an otherwise normal movement.



## SYMPTOMS

- Sudden onset of pain which is often associated with “giving way” in the joint.
- Knee joint will often lock when the leg is almost straight; often the patient will try to wiggle the leg back and forth to unlock the knee.

- Intermittent buckling and clicking of the knee for no apparent reason.
- Chronic or intermittent swelling.
- Walking with a bent knee because it is painful to straighten.

If there is bruising and swelling with severe generalized pain within minutes of the injury, this often indicates there is also a tear of a ligament within the knee joint.

## TREATMENT

Following a meniscal injury it is important to try and control the swelling. As ice pack applied to the knee for 10 to 15 minutes will help to decrease the inflammation and as a result the pain and swelling will also decrease. It is also important to avoid the activities that aggravate or caused the injury. Try no to twist the knee, or forcefully extend it.

Meniscal injuries may or may not require surgical repair. In either case consult a physiotherapist immediately. He or she will start by working to reduce the swelling, inflammation and pain in the knee. Once the inflammation in the knee has started to improve, the physiotherapist will give you exercises to increase the range of motion, strength and balance, or proprioception in your knee. It is important to go through full rehabilitation with a physiotherapist to return your knee to its pre-injury level of function.