



# University Orthopaedic Center

## Sports Medicine & Athletic Injuries Tip Sheet



### Q. What is a torn meniscus?

**A.** The medial and lateral menisci (plural of meniscus) of the knee are two crescent moon-shaped disks of tough tissue that lie between the ends of the upper leg bone and lower leg bone that form the knee joint. Meniscus tears commonly occur during sports when the knee is twisted while the foot is planted firmly on the ground. In people over the age of 40 whose menisci are worn down, a tear might occur with normal movement, minimal activity, or minor injury.

**Common signs & symptoms** include pain, swelling in the affected area, tenderness along the joint of the knee, locking or catching of the knee joint or giving way (buckling) of the knee.

**Prevention:** Appropriately warming up and stretching before practice or a competition, maintaining good conditioning and wearing protective, supportive devices is helpful.

Some meniscal injuries can heal on their own, and some do not heal but may not cause any symptoms. However, the only definitive treatment for meniscal tears requires surgery.

*For answers to more frequently asked questions, go to UOC's Ortho Q & A website page.*



**Did you know?** More adults than ever are participating in sports. Unfortunately, many factors contribute to sports injuries as the body grows older. The main one is that adults may not be as agile and resilient as they were when they were younger. It is also possible that some injuries occur when a person tries to move from inactive to a more active lifestyle too quickly. But keep in mind, a few tips to enjoying sports more is all it takes to keep you safe from injury or lessen the risk.

To prevent injuries, adult athletes should take the following precautions:

- Don't be a "weekend warrior," packing a week's worth of activity into a day or two. Try to maintain a moderate level of activity throughout the week.
- Learn to do your sport right. Using proper form can reduce your risk of "overuse" injuries such as tendonitis and stress fractures.
- Remember safety gear. Depending on the sport, this may mean knee or wrist pads or a helmet.
- Accept your body's limits. You may not be able to perform at the same level you did 10 or 20 years ago. Modify activities as necessary.
- Increase your exercise level gradually.

Strive for a total body workout of cardiovascular, strength training, and flexibility exercises. Cross-training reduces injury while promoting total fitness.

*courtesy of:*



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Sports Do  
Not Build  
Character...  
They  
Reveal It.

John Wooden

