

Medial collateral ligament (MCL) injury of the knee

Fracture care team [Patient information](#)

This is a follow-up to your recent phone call with the fracture care team. Your case has been reviewed by an orthopaedic consultant (bone specialist) and fracture care physiotherapist.

You have an injury to the medial collateral ligament (MCL). This is a ligament on the inside of your knee.

Healing: This injury will take 6-12 weeks to heal.

Pain and swelling: Your knee may be swollen. Resting and raising the leg will help. Take pain killers as prescribed.

Using your leg: You may walk on your leg as comfort allows. You may have been given crutches to help.

You must wear the brace fitted by the Emergency Department. This should be set to allow a limited range of movement for the first two weeks. You should only take the brace off to wash your leg each day. Try not to fully straighten your leg when washing for the first two week.

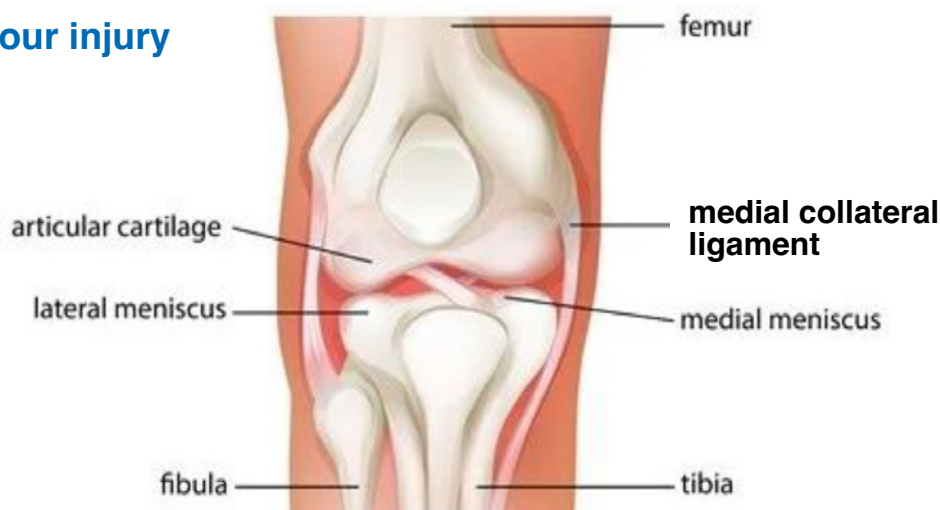
Follow up: You may be referred to a physiotherapist following discussion on the phone.

We do not normally follow up these injuries. If you are not progressing as expected or your physiotherapist is concerned, we would be happy to review you in fracture clinic.

If you are worried about following this rehabilitation plan, please contact us for advice.

If you have pain other than at the site of the injury or surrounding area, please get in touch. Contact details are at the bottom of this letter.

Area of your injury



Please follow the management plan below

What to expect:

Weeks since injury	Rehabilitation plan
0-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Wear the brace for six weeks.✓ You may remove it for personal hygiene and to apply a cold pack.✓ You must try to avoid fully straightening your leg.✓ The brace can be worn under or over your clothes, whichever is most comfortable.✓ You are allowed to put weight through the leg, with or without crutches, as comfortable.
2-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Continue to wear the brace set 0-90 degrees. See 'fitting the range of movement brace' below.✓ Start the exercises 'exercises from two weeks'.
4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Continue to wear the brace set 0-120 degrees. See 'fitting the range of movement brace' below.✓ The brace can be removed at night.
6-12	If you are still having significant pain and stiffness, then please contact us for further advice.

Advice for a new injury:

Cold packs:

A cold pack (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can provide short term pain relief. Apply this to the sore area for up to 15 minutes. Do this every few hours. Make sure the ice is never in direct contact with the skin.

Rest and elevation:

Try to rest the knee for the first 24-72 hours to allow the early stage of healing to begin. Raise your knee above the level of your hips to reduce swelling. You can use pillows or a stool to keep your foot up.

Early movement and exercise:

Early movement of the ankle and foot is important to promote circulation. This reduces the risk of getting a DVT (blood clot). Follow the exercises below without causing too much pain. This will stop your knee from becoming too stiff. These exercises will help the healing process.

Early weight bearing (putting weight through your injured leg) helps healing. Try to walk as normally as possible as this will help with your recovery.

Fitting the range of movement brace



The brace will stop your knee from fully bending or straightening for the first two weeks.

It should be set to allow movement from 20-70 degrees.

The range of movement will then be increased in the following stages:

- 0-90 degrees for weeks three and four
- 0-120 degrees for weeks five and six

The brace can then be removed completely. Up until four weeks it should be worn at all times, other than for washing and exercises.

Your brace may look different to the one pictured. You may have been shown how to adjust it in the Emergency Department. If you weren't, or you are not happy to do this yourself, your physiotherapist can do this for you.

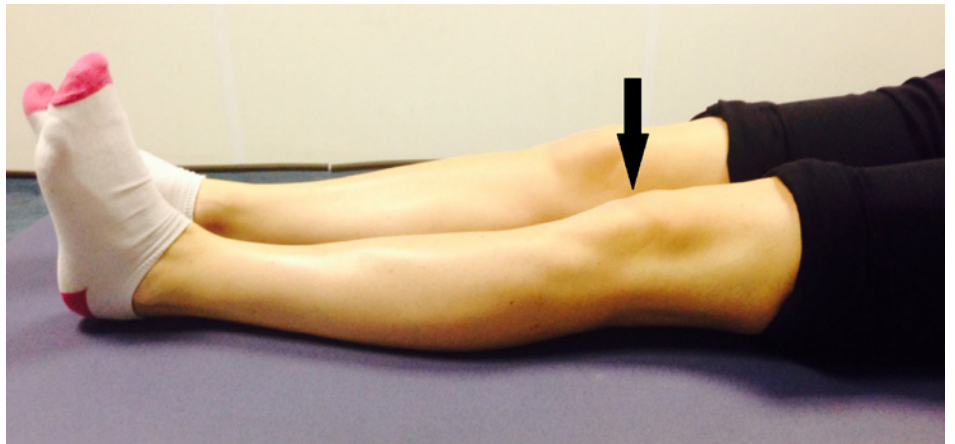
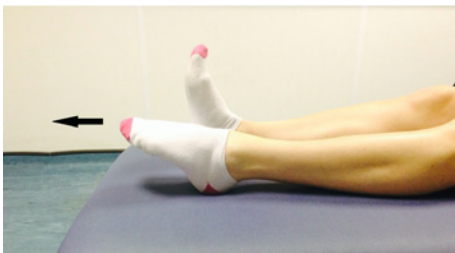
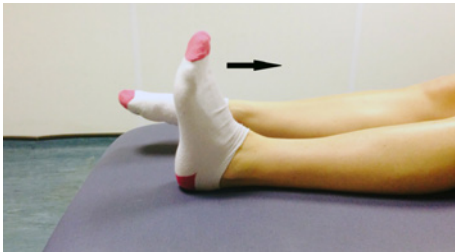
Return to driving

You may return to driving when you are able to fully control the vehicle. This includes being able to safely do an emergency stop. You must not drive in the brace you have been given. It may take several weeks before you feel safe. This varies from person to person.

Exercises

These exercises can be started immediately.

Initial exercise to do 3-4 times a day (with the splint on for the first six weeks).



1. Point your foot up and down. Repeat 10 times.
2. Sit with the leg straight and supported on a flat surface. Gently tense your thigh muscle and try to straighten your knee further. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 7-10 times.
3. Sit with the leg straight and supported on a flat surface. Tense your thigh muscles as for exercise two, then lift your leg off the bed about 5cm. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 7-10 times.

Exercises from two weeks:

To be done with the brace on. Do these exercise 3-4 times a day.

You may take the brace off for the exercises after 4 weeks.



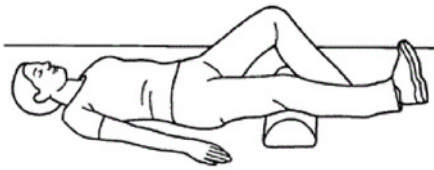
Active straight leg raise

Lying on your back with your leg straight and the other leg bent.

Exercise your straight leg by pulling the toes up and lifting the leg about 20 cm off the bed. Keep your knee straight all the time.

Hold for 10 secs and then slowly relax.

Repeat 10 - 15 times.



Inner range quads

Lying on your back bend your good knee and place a cushion or rolled towel under your injured knee.

Exercise your straight leg by pulling your foot and toes up, tightening your thigh muscle and straightening the knee (keep the back of the knee on the cushion).

Hold for 10 secs and then slowly relax.

Repeat 10 - 15 times.



Heel slides

Lying on your back on your bed. The bed sheets will act as a sliding surface.

Bend and straighten your hip and knee by sliding your foot up and down the bed sheets. If you are not wearing the brace, you can bend the knee as far as you feel is comfortable.

You can also use your hands if needed to help gently bend the knee.

Repeat times 10 - 15 times.

Contact details

Please contact **0300 019 2802**

(Answer machine monitored Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm)

Or e-mail: **uhd.fracturecare@nhs.net**

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Poole Hospital, Longfleet Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2JB

Author: **Paula Reynolds** Date: **April 2026** Version: **One** Review date: **April 2029** Ref: **014/25**

t: 01202 665511 w: www.uhd.nhs.uk f: @UHTrust i: @uhd_nhs

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