

ACT Injuries—The Female Version



Every year in the United States, more than 20,000 high school girls experience a **sports-related knee injury**, resulting in surgery to reconstruct a ligament. According to leading experts, female athletes have a higher risk than their male counterparts of **anterior cruciate ligament (ACT) injuries** when participating in the same sports involving jumping and pivoting. The reasons appear to be related primarily to neuromuscular recruitment and functional patterns, which

differ between the sexes.

Since female participation has increased in these sports, researchers have been prompted to conduct studies to develop prevention methods for female athletes. While balance training has been the standard in preventing ACT injury, it is now believed that a **neuromuscular approach can decrease the risk of serious knee injury** by improving postural stability. If your daughter is a student athlete, she may benefit from participation in a knee injury-prevention program during the off-season to reduce the likelihood of a serious knee injury during her sport's season.

Some high schools are already implementing **knee injury-prevention programs designed to both strengthen and increase the function of the area** by creating specific exercise patterns to reduce the risk of injury. These programs typically take place 2 or 3 times a week during the off-season and may include

- **increasing nerve and muscle control;**
- **improving balance;**
- **instruction on how to avoid injury-prone situations;**
- **stretching;** and
- **weight training.**

If your daughter's high school does not offer such a program, you may want to find a local knee injury-prevention program. We may be able to recommend a reputable one. If none is available in your area, we can work with your daughter to create a series of exercises that can help **reduce her risk of knee injury and prepare her for the upcoming season.**