

# Not all ACL tears require surgery

By Lauren Caselli, NPR

An ACL tear is an athlete's worst nightmare. One of the knee's main stabilizers, the ACL keeps you upright when you plant and pivot. Reconstructive surgery and months of recovery often follow ACL tears.

Yet a study suggests that surgery isn't required for almost 25 percent of first-time, skiing-induced ACL injuries.

The reason might have something to do with skiing, says Steven B. Singleton, M.D., FACS, founding partner of the Steadman Hawkins Clinic of the Carolinas. Because many recreational skiers injure themselves at lower speeds, the force of the energy transfer through the knee often leads only to partial ACL tears, which can sometimes heal on their own. Beyond the force of impact, the fixed position of the ankle and foot within the ski boot might help minimize tears, says the study's co-author, Dr. Demetris Delos.

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