

Loss of motion after knee surgery may increase osteoarthritis risk, research suggests

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The onset of osteoarthritis may be related to a loss of knee motion after reconstructive ACL surgery, as noted in new research presented at the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine's Annual Meeting in San Diego, California, July 7-10, 2011. Patients who showed motion limitations after surgery were more likely to develop arthritic changes in the knee.

Provided by American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine

"Our research shows that patients given rehabilitation that emphasizes full motion be obtained and maintained throughout time after surgery have more favorable results on [x-rays](#) than patients who lose motion." said lead researcher K. Donald Shelbourne, MD, Founder, Shelbourne Knee Center.

The study examined data from 780 patients who were at least five years after ACL reconstruction with a patellar tendon graft. In individual follow-ups, patients were evaluated and rated based on knee range of motion tests and radiographs. The percentage of patients with normal radiographs (no arthritic changes in the knee) was 71 percent in patients with normal range of motion compared to 55 percent of patients who showed deficits in motion. In patients who had similar meniscus removal, [osteoarthritis](#) was observed more in patients who had motion deficits.

"Something like osteoarthritis can be debilitating," said Shelbourne, "and our goal is to continually find new ways to help patients avoid such a problem."

This study adds to previous research identifying major [risk factors](#) for the development of osteoarthritis after ACL reconstruction, including meniscectomy (removal of the meniscus) and articular cartilage damage.

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