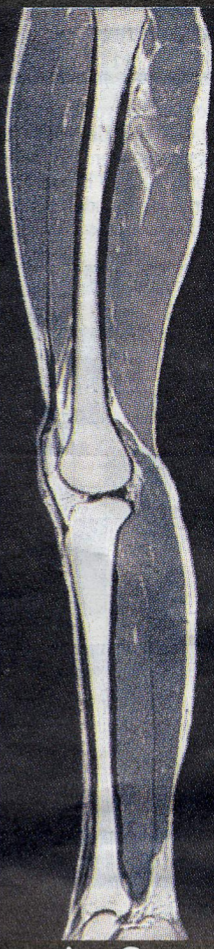


Health matters

Mr
Harminder
S. Gosal,
Consultant
Orthopaedic
and
Knee
Surgeon
from
Cheltenham
Knee
Unit at
Linton
House
discusses
skiing.



Cheltenham Imaging Centre

WITH the skiing season approaching it's important to be adequately prepared to enjoy the sport and prevent injury. First get fit, as most skiing injuries occur to recreational skiers. This should involve about a six-week pre-skiing training regime, usually organised by specialist physiotherapists, fitness trainers or in sports gyms. Ideally this should include assessment, review of any current injuries and a medically-researched exercise programme. Next, make sure your skiing equipment is appropriate. A helmet can reduce head injuries, while wrist guards in snow boarders can help reduce wrist fractures. Using incorrectly adjusted skis and bindings significantly increases the risk of suffering injuries – seek advice from a specialist supplier of ski gear.

Muscle fatigue reaches its peak 48 hours after the start of a ski holiday. The highest risk of accident is after 3pm on the third afternoon of the holiday. It's therefore, important to take rest periods. Novices should try skiing on dry ski slopes in preparation and have lessons before taking to the slopes.

Injuries whilst skiing are not as common as is perceived. Whilst any part of the body can be injured, the knee joint accounts for 30-40% of all ski injuries. The medial ligament of the knee is most often injured, but tears of the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) are also quite common. In the event of injury seek medical help early. Initial management of knee injuries is to reduce swelling by applying ice, take anti-inflammatories and use simple bandaging or bracing. Surgery is rarely indicated in the very acute phase.

Do not ski with a swollen knee joint. Wearing knee braces is usually not recommended for skiing, unless there has been previous ACL reconstruction, as some studies have shown this reduces the re-rupture rate of the ligament. On returning from your ski trip seek specialist help for definitive management of the injury. This will involve further clinical assessment and may require X-rays and MRI scanning.

Cheltenham Knee Unit offers 'one stop clinics' at Linton House where you will be assessed by a Consultant Knee Surgeon, and investigated with any X-rays or MRI scans if necessary. At the end of consultation all the investigations will be discussed with you and an appropriate treatment plan made to allow you to return to your normal activities.

■ For more information call 01242 535908 or visit www.cheltenhamkneeunit.co.uk, or pop into Linton House Clinic, Thirlestaine Road, Cheltenham.

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