

# KNEE BRACES

By  
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Marv Roberson BYU Trainer holding his knee brace.



BYU Player strapping on his knee brace. "Ready To Go" knee braces may become as essential as a helmet.

Knee Braces are rapidly growing in popularity and legislation may soon be passed making them mandatory to wear in football games or even practice. The Lenox-Hill Knee Brace has been around for some time now but it is for post operative knee or an already injured knee. The new braces on the market today are to be worn for INJURY PREVENTION on a healthy knee.

Nearly 75% of injuries in pro football required knee surgery. I believe that figure is somewhat less at the college and high school levels. According to USA today: Dr. James Garrick of San Francisco's Center for Sports Medicine found about half of the Knee injuries in the NFL resulted in blocking and tackling, 30% were "accidental" often caused by a teammate falling on another and 20% involved no contact.

It has been my experience that knee injuries involving no contact happened with a weak untrained leg. Proper training with squats should virtually eliminate this kind of knee injury. I also believe a strong leg trained properly with squats, step-ups, leg extensions and leg curls can save 90% of knee injuries in that 30% accidental category. As

far as injuries resulting from blocking and tackling, the properly trained knee can withstand much more than the untrained knee. However, players are getting bigger, faster and stronger. If a 250 pound player, comes in at 90 miles per hour and hits a planted leg at the side of the knee joint, something bad is going to happen even in the strongest of knees. That's where knee braces come in.

Marv Roberson who has been the trainer for 19 years at Brigham Young University, swears by them. He even designed his own and has used it for the last 4 years with the BYU football team. All linemen and linebackers used them and after All-American tight end Gordon Hudson got a knee injury, then all running backs and tight ends also used the knee brace. Knee braces are mandatory at all times (practice or games) for linemen and linebackers. Trevor Matich, a BYU All-American lineman states, "We like the knee braces. If the pros don't furnish me with one next year, I'll buy my own!"

Marv Roberson beams proudly, "We've only had one knee lost in four years and that one wasn't a varsity player! I've had them break in half and the player would walk away OK! We had 14 knees my first year and 7 knees the year before. We had to do something."

The most common football knee injury is when the medial collateral ligament (inside of knee) is damaged by a blow to the outside of the knee (lateral side). Roberson claims that his knee brace will also prevent, in many cases, hyper-extension which involves damage to the Anterior Cruciate.

There is some concern that knee braces may restrict movement. Pittsburgh Steeler wide receiver John Stallworth states, "I get into some pretty awkward positions when I'm making cuts. The knee brace might hinder that." Roberson counters by saying, "If everybody wears them then everybody is equal. That could happen, as it might become law in some states. And as for the cost, if they prevent knee injuries, how can you afford not to have them."

The Marv Roberson Knee Brace sells for \$65.00 per pair. If you would like additional information write: Marco Med, Inc., P.O. Box 7402, University Station, Provo, UT 84602

There are other knee braces on the market and you can bet, if knee braces become mandatory many more companies will offer knee braces. Some companies that we have heard about are Anderson, Tru-fit, DonJoy Collataguard, Stromgren and McDavid.

We have heard some good reports from people on the Stromgren which sells for \$48.95. One test result showed that Stromgren was of superior strength. For further information you may talk to your local sporting goods dealer or write: Steve Arensdorf, P.O. Box 1230, Hays, Kansas 67601.

The McDavid Knee Guard is also good and has made improvements since last year. You may purchase the McDavid through Bigger Faster Stronger at \$49.00 each or write: McDavid Knee Guard, Inc., P.O. Box 9, Clarendon Hills, IL 60514 for further information.