

Femoroacetabular Impingement (FAI)

F. Winston Gwathmey, MD

University of Virginia Sports Medicine

(434) 243-7778

hipdoc@virginia.edu

www.uvaortho.com/sports

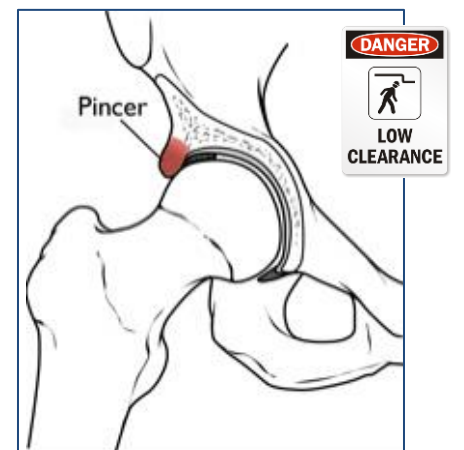
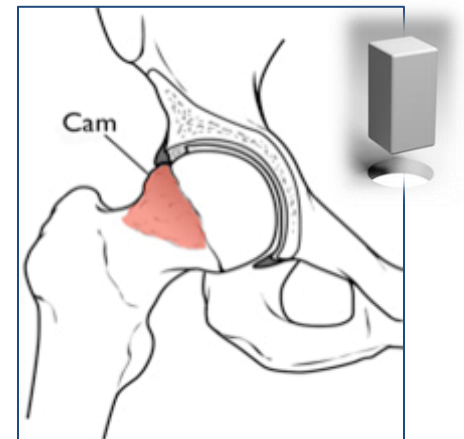
What is Femoroacetabular Impingement?

- the normal hip is a highly congruent **ball and socket** joint
- FAI occurs when there is a structural **mismatch** between the ball (femur) and the socket (acetabulum)
- **abnormal contact (impingement)** at extremes of hip range of motion leads to **dysfunction** and **damage**
- **small deformity** may become symptomatic with high-level activities while **symptoms with routine activities** may occur with **larger deformities** or **more advanced damage**
- damage usually the result of **cumulative effects** of **repetitive abnormal contact**



Types

- **Cam Impingement**
 - ball (femoral head) **not** completely round
 - may be a **prominent bump** or the ball may be **elliptical** in shape
 - damage occurs when the **out-of-round** area of the ball rotates into the round socket (*square peg in a round hole*)
 - pain with hip flexion, inward rotation, squats, etc.
 - may cause cartilage damage and labral tearing
- **Pincer Impingement**
 - **overhanging rim** of socket *decreases clearance* during hip motion
 - may be caused by a socket that is **too deep** or **not facing forward** (retroversion)
 - damage occurs when the **neck collides** with the rim of socket
 - pain with hip flexion, stairs, abduction, etc.
 - may cause labral pinching and tearing
- **Mixed or Combined**: elements of both cam and pincer FAI



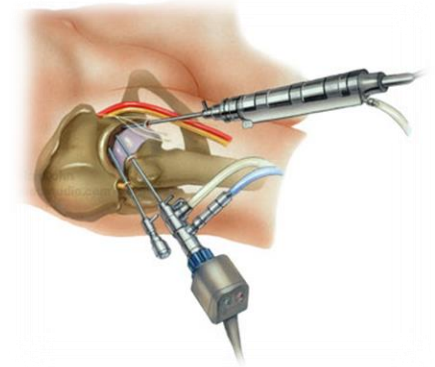
Management

- **Key concepts to consider:**
 - FAI is a **dynamic** problem.... it occurs because the **hip is under stress** from the activities to which it is exposed
 - high percentage of people have hips that would meet X-ray criteria for FAI, but **only a small percentage become symptomatic**, and an **even smaller percentage require intervention**
 - high percentage of people with FAI have similar findings **on the other hip** but do not have symptoms
- fundamental to management is returning the hip to the **pre-symptomatic state** by **reducing inflammation** and **optimizing the mechanics** around the pelvis
- **rest** and **avoiding the inciting activity** will improve symptoms and allow healing
- **anti-inflammatory medicines** (ibuprofen, naproxen, etc.) decrease swelling and inflammation
- a **cortisone injection** may help to calm inflammation in the joint
- **physical therapy** is essential to **improving pelvic mechanics** and **stabilizing gait**
- **most cases of FAI improve without surgery**

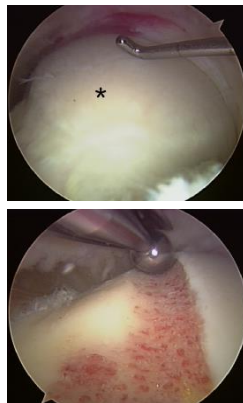
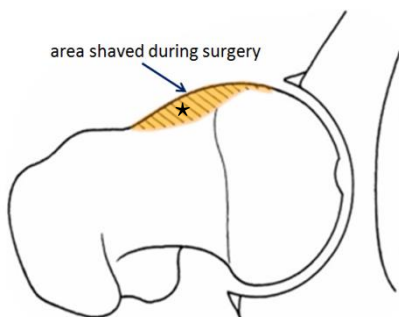


Arthroscopic Surgery for FAI

- goal is to **correct the bony abnormality** underlying the impingement
- small (4 mm) **video camera** inserted into the hip joint and **highly specialized instruments** used to perform surgery
- **traction** is required to separate ball from socket
- **cam FAI** – the **ball is recontoured to improve congruity**
- **pincer FAI** – the **rim is trimmed to increase clearance**
- secondary damage (labral tears, cartilage damage) fixed or cleaned up
- recovery takes **4 to 6 months** and requires rigorous therapy to restore hip function
- **potential complications** include traction-related injury, nerve damage, progression of labral tearing and/or arthritis, abnormal bone formation in muscles around the hip, blood clots, incomplete correction, and residual pain



Cam correction



Pincer correction

