AVULSION FRACTURES OF THE KNEE
ASSOCIATED WITH PATELLAR DISLOCATION*

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INTRODUCTION

Avulsion fractures of the knee secondary to acute patellar dislocation can occur at three sites: (1) the medial patellar margin, (2) the posterior medial aspect of the patella, and (3) the lateral femoral condyle (1). Patellar avulsions usually appear as small bony fragments just medial, or postero-medial to the edge of the patella. They are best seen on skyline views. Lateral condylar fractures are less well known but often require surgical attention. The fracture fragment may be small or large but often is larger than originally anticipated from plain films. It resides somewhere in the joint space.

All these avulsion fractures result from severe, sudden, and often violent twisting, wrenching injuries to the knee. They usually are sustained with sport activity such as basketball and football. In these cases the patella dislocates laterally and as it rides over the lateral condyle, an avulsion of the medial or postero-medial aspect of the patella, or the lateral condyle can occur (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Avulsion fractures with patellar dislocation: (1) medial patellar edge, (2) postero-medial aspect of the patella, and (3) the lateral condyle.