

Premier  
Orthopaedic  
Pathway

## **Physiotherapy after knee arthroscopy**

Physiotherapy is vital to make the most of your surgery and is essential to ensure the success of the operation.

### **In hospital**

You will see a physiotherapist on the day of your operation and they will:

- Advise you how to manage your pain and swelling when you go home.
- Teach you the correct way to do the exercises in this book, enabling you to manage your physical recovery.
- Aim to fully straighten your knee.
- Aim to achieve a right-angle knee bend.
- Measure you for crutches and show you how to get up and walk with them safely so you can manage at home. You can put as much weight through your operated leg as you can tolerate.
- If you have stairs at home your physiotherapist will practise them with you before you go.

This is the order you should go up and down stairs:

**Going up:**  
Non-operated leg  
Operated leg  
Crutch/ stick

**Coming down:**  
Crutch/ stick  
Operated leg  
Non-operated leg

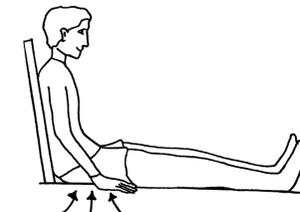
### **Exercises in hospital**

In the initial period after your operation your circulation tends to slow down. It is important to maintain good circulation by doing these two exercises whilst lying in bed:

1. Draw a circle with your ankle  
Repeat x 10 on each leg



2. Tighten your buttock muscles, hold for 5 seconds then release. Repeat x 10



Repeat these every half an hour in the recovery period until you are regularly up on your feet.

## Home Exercises

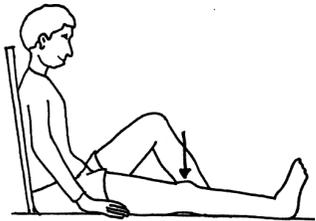
**PERFORM 2 SETS OF 10 REPETITIONS, 3 TIMES EVERY DAY**

### a) Ankle circles

Draw circles with each of your ankles



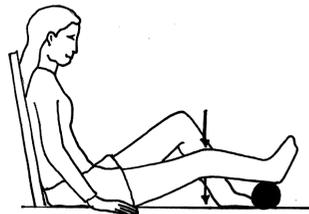
### b) Knee straightening



Sit upright with your operated leg in front of you. Bring your toes towards you and press your knee down into the bed by tightening your thigh muscles. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax and repeat.

### c) Knee hangs

Lying down. Rest your heel on a thick rolled up towel. Allow your knee to 'hang'. Tighten your thigh muscles. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax and repeat.

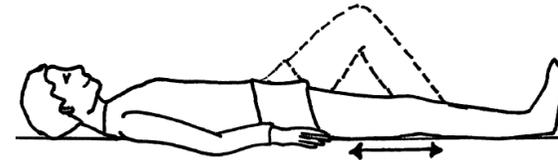


### d) Knee bends in sitting

Sit on a chair with a sock on the foot of your operated foot. Pull the foot towards the chair. Bring it underneath the chair if possible. You are aiming to achieve a knee bend of greater than 90°. Relax and repeat.

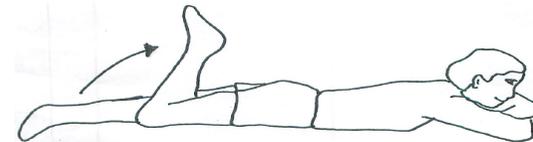


### e) Knee bends in lying



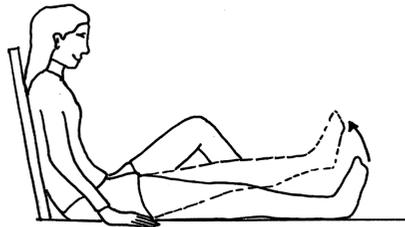
Bend your operated leg, ensuring your knee faces upwards and straighten. Relax and repeat.

### f) Knee bends lying on your front

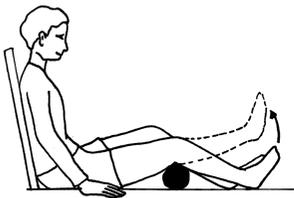


Lying on your front, control a slow knee bend, bringing your heel towards your bottom. Lower it down very slowly to the bed, relax and repeat.

g) Straight leg raise  
Keeping you knee straight lift your operated leg 6 inches off the bed. Hold 5 seconds. Relax and repeat.

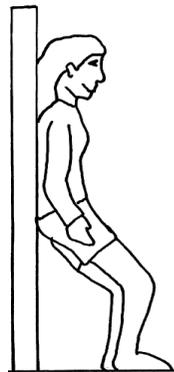


h) Quads strengthening

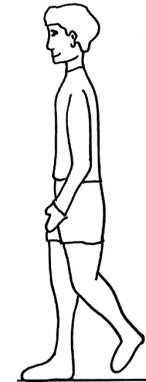


Place a rolled up towel under the knee. Straighten your knee by tightening the muscles at the front of your thigh. Hold for a few seconds and release. Repeat 10 times.

i) Wall squats  
Standing leaning back against a wall. Slide down the wall as far as comfortable. Hold 5 seconds. Return to starting position. Repeat.



j) Practice standing on 1 leg  
When you get opportunity i.e. brushing your teeth or waiting for the kettle to boil.



## Frequently asked questions

### When can I return to work?

There are no medical rules with regards to when you can return to work following a knee arthroscopy, and this must therefore be determined according to the type of job you do. One week should be sufficient depending upon your diagnosis, however if you have a manual job you may require more time off.

### When can I drive a car?

Driving can usually be performed for short periods after 5-7 days providing the knee is pain-free and you have sufficient strength to control the foot pedals and make an emergency stop. It is also a good idea to check the terms of your car insurance, as some policies state that you must not drive for a specified period after an operation.

### **Can I cycle, swim or go back to the gym to strengthen my knee?**

You can ride an exercise bike and/or a normal bike when you have enough knee bend to do so. You should be able to return to other sports approximately 4 weeks after surgery; however this will be dependent upon your initial diagnosis and your progress.

It is important you have good movement and strength before **easing** yourself back into sport. Swimming or water activities should be avoided until your stitches are removed and the wounds have healed. If you have any concerns about when you can return to specific activities talk to your consultant when you go to your next clinic appointment.

### **What if the pain or swelling does not improve?**

It is common to have pain and swelling in your knee however, you may be overdoing it. Rehabilitation needs to take a smooth and structured path.

- Continue to take regular pain relief as prescribed.
- Elevate your leg so your foot is higher than your hip
- Place ice cubes in a plastic bag and crush them. Place a tea towel over your dressing and apply the ice to the front or back of the knee for 10 minutes 2 or 3 times a day, until the swelling subsides. Avoid ice if you have any skin problems or altered sensation around the knee.

- If the pain and swelling increase, please contact your GP for further advice.

### **When can I stop using crutches?**

You can gradually increase the amount of weight you put through your leg during walking and come off crutches as soon as you are confident to do so.

### **How long will my recovery take?**

You will be able to return to most normal activities around the house within a few days of surgery; however you should not try to overdo it.

Each patient is an individual and will have a different pace and rate of recovery.

***Your progress is largely dependent on how much effort you put in. In order to get the best outcome your self-motivation is crucial!***

**Any further questions?**

Please feel free to ask your physiotherapy team if you have any further questions.

**Your physiotherapist is**

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**Contact details**

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**Extension:** 35284 (in-patient orthopaedics)  
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