

Premier
Orthopaedic
Pathway

Physiotherapy after total knee replacement

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

Day 1

You will see a physiotherapist on the first day after your operation, who will work through some exercises with you, and help you take a few steps to sit in the chair. You will be given a walking frame to help you balance and your physiotherapist will be advised how much weight you can put through your operated leg.

You may also be put on a 'CPM' (continuous passive movement) machine to help you bend your knee if you are having problems.

Walking

Initially you will have the supervision of a nurse or physiotherapist whilst walking. We will advise you when it is safe for you to walk on your own.

You may turn around in either direction, but you must not pivot or twist on your operated leg - step around instead.

The distance you will be able to walk varies from person to person. It is a good idea to build this distance up gradually to maintain fitness. You will not damage your knee by walking unless you take more weight through it than instructed.

Further progress

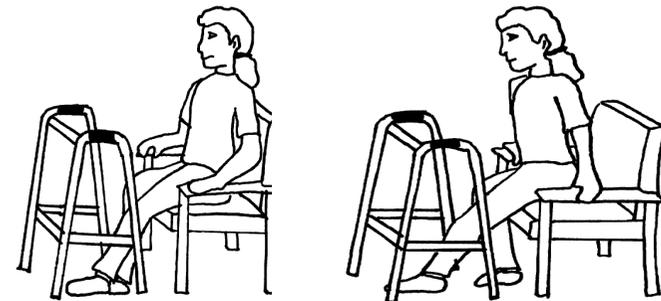
Everyone progresses at different speeds. During your stay in hospital your physiotherapist will advise you on how to progress your exercises and your walking.

Standing up

1. Move to the front of the chair seat.
2. Push up using the arms of the chair into standing.

Sitting down

1. Make sure you can feel the chair against the back of your legs
2. Reach back for the arms of the chair.
3. Without bending forwards gently lower yourself into the chair, taking the weight evenly through your arms.
4. You may find it more comfortable to slide your operated leg forwards as you sit down.



Stairs

If you have stairs your physiotherapist will practice them with you before you go home to make sure you are safe.

This is the order you should go up and down:

Going up:

Non-operated leg
Operated leg
Crutch/ stick

Coming down:

Crutch/ stick
Operated leg
Non-operated leg

Exercises

Exercises are very important and should be started as soon as possible after surgery.

Now that you have had your knee operation it is up to you to work hard in order to make the most of your new knee and to return to normal activities as soon as possible.

Either the bed **or** the chair exercises should be done hourly for the first few days following your surgery. After this exercises should be done at least five times a day, unless your physiotherapist advises otherwise.

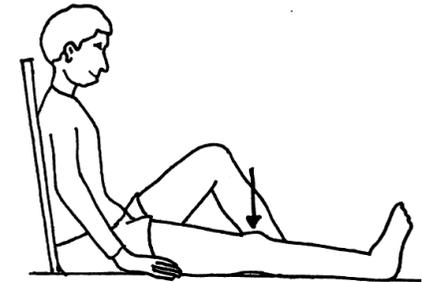
Bed exercises

1. Foot & ankle

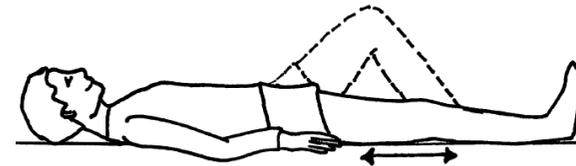


Move your ankle slowly round in a large circle.
Repeat this for 30 seconds every hour.

2. Thigh squeezes
With legs out straight, push the back of your knee firmly into the bed. Hold 5 seconds then relax. Repeat 10 times.

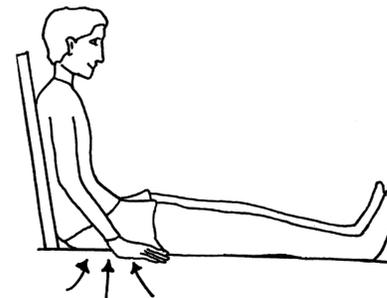


3. Knee bending
Bend and straighten your hip and knee by sliding your foot up and down the bed. Repeat 10 times.



4. Bottom squeezes

Squeeze buttocks firmly together for 5 seconds.
Repeat 10 times.

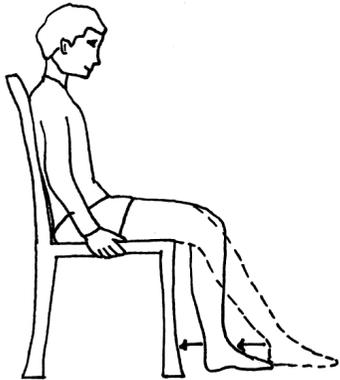


Chair exercises

5. Knee straightening
Pull your toes up, tighten your thigh muscles and straighten your knee. Hold 5 seconds then slowly lower down. Repeat 10 times.



6. Knee bends



Bend your knee as much as possible so that your foot slides under the chair then slide the foot forward to straighten the knee. Repeat 10 times.

Standing exercises

7. Hold onto a firm support. Keeping your knees together, lift the foot on the operated side off the floor. Hold 5 seconds, then slowly lower down. Repeat 10 times.



It is important that you continue your exercises for at least 3 months.

You should continue to use your crutches/ walking stick until you can walk without a limp.

Frequently asked questions.....

Will I have physiotherapy when I leave the hospital?

Follow up physiotherapy is not routinely needed and you will be advised if you do require any. If you do need it, it will be arranged for you before you leave hospital.

Driving

Check with your consultant when you are able to drive again - this is usually after 6-12 weeks.

You must inform your insurance company that you have had an operation.

What is the best way to get in and out of a car?

It is easier to get into the car from a road or driveway rather than the pavement (which is higher).

1. Put the passenger seat as far back as possible with the backrest slightly tilted back.
2. Stand with your back to the car with knees touching the seat.
3. Gently lower yourself down onto the seat with your bottom as far onto the seat as possible, sliding your operated leg out in front of you.
4. Swing your legs round into the car.

Getting out of the car is the same procedure in reverse.

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.

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

Physiotherapy department
Royal Free Hospital
Pond Street
London NW3 2QG

Tel: 020 7794 0500

Extension: 35284 (in-patient orthopaedics)
34059 (out-patient department)

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Patient information programme 2009
[review date: July 2012]
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