

Post-Operative Knee Instructions

These are general instructions, which may be altered by your physical therapist or doctor depending on your specific condition. If you have any question, or notice anything unusual, please call your doctor or PT.

General Care

- Take medications as prescribed by physician. Generally, you can decrease the pain meds as pain allows but continue to take anti-inflammatories until otherwise directed.
- Wear TED hose or brace (if applicable) as instructed by physicians. Your PT or doctor may also recommend using an ACE wrap or other compressive device as needed to manage your symptoms.
- Keep the incision clean and dry. To shower wrap leg with plastic wrap and tape or tie top portion only, so water cannot run down leg. You'll need to do this for 14 days.
- Your physical therapist will change the dressing at your first therapy visit. Use polar pack/ ice constantly for the first 72-hour. After that, you may start to wean off of it as directed by PT. Generally, you will not need it after one week.
- Keep leg elevated, foot above knee, knee above heart when down to help reduce swelling. Stay down 50% of the time unless directed otherwise.

Ambulation (Walking)

If you are limping, you should be using your crutches (or other assistive device). Your PT will advance you as appropriate. To stop using them too early may delay your progress, or cause problems in other body parts.

Exercise should be done 3x/day initially, or as directed by your PT. This program will get you started. It will be changed or added to as appropriate for your knee.

- Extension hangs (until full extension is regained, let knee sag straight by propping it on a chair with nothing behind knee, or allow foot to hang off edge of bed while lying on stomach for at least 5-10 minutes, every hour)
- Heel slides (gently bend knee up and down 20 reps every hour long sitting or seated)
- Quad sets (at least 5 seconds hold, 10 reps, every hour)
- Hamstring stretch (at least 30 seconds hold, one rep, 8-10 times a day)
- Calf stretch (at least 30 seconds hold, one rep)
- Weight shifts (in standing, using crutches or standing behind furniture for support, slowly shift weight to and from operated leg, work on stability and control. Do this side to side, and also with operated leg in front and then behind. Tighten thigh each time you step on leg. Repeat 5X each direction.)
- Ankle pumps should be done hourly to prevent blood clots.