

Arthroscopic Knee Surgery Home Exercise Program

What will I be able to do right after surgery?

We want you to get back full range of motion after your knee surgery. It is safe for you to bend and straighten your knee. You may walk and bear weight on your operative knee. We want you to begin walking right away. **Begin the exercises in 1-2 days.** Do them daily. If an exercise is painful, stop doing it. Please keep in mind that these are guidelines. You may need to change what you do depending on your surgery, swelling, and level of pain.

Will I need to use crutches?

If you have crutches bring them the day of your surgery. If you do not have crutches, they will be given to you in the hospital the day of your surgery. Your insurance will be billed for the crutches, but you may need to pay a portion of the cost. You may bear weight on your knee after surgery. Slowly increase what you do, using pain and swelling in your knee as your guide. When walking with crutches, walk as you always do, heel first then roll over the ball of your foot. You may not need to use your crutches for more than 1-2 days. If you are having pain and swelling, use the crutches as long as you need them.

Elevate the leg as much as you can during the first 48 hours after surgery. This will help to lessen the swelling. You should be able to walk without crutches sooner when the swelling is gone.

What kind of exercises will I do?

1 to 2 days After Surgery

Ankle Pumps: When lying or sitting, pump your ankle up, down, and around in circles several times per hour. This will help the return of blood in your leg. Do ankle pumps with both legs.

Toe Raises: Stand balanced on both feet. Gently rock up to your toes and back down to your heel. Do 3 sets of 20 toe raises throughout the day.

Quad Sets: Tighten the group of muscles on top of your thigh (quadriceps) and try to straighten (extend) your knee. You should be able to see and/or feel the muscle contract. Hold the quad for 5 seconds. Relax the muscle completely. Repeat. Try to do 100 quad sets each day in sets of 5-10.

Straight Leg Raises: Lie on your back, bend the good knee, and place that foot on the floor. Perform a quad set and lift your other leg up 1 to 1.5 feet off the ground. Hold for 3-5 seconds, and then slowly lower your leg. Relax. This exercise can be done 2-3 times a day. Each time try to do 3 sets of 20.

3 to 4 Days After Surgery

At this time, you may feel stronger and ready to begin strengthening exercises. If you have access to an exercise bike, you may begin to ride with the bike set at a low resistance. Begin riding for about 5 minutes, then slowly increase your riding time over the next few days to about 20 minutes.

Mini Squats: Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Slowly bend your knees and hips in to a partial squat. Keep weight balanced over both feet. This should feel like sitting in a very high chair. You may need to use the back of a chair for balance. There should be no pain. Repeat 10 times; 3-4 times per day.

When will I begin physical therapy?

Most patients will start physical therapy 3-7 days after surgery. Your surgeon will adjust your referral to physical therapy and start time if there is a reason for yours to be different.

When should I return to work?

Your time off from work will depend on what type of work you do. If you sit for most of your work day, you may be able to return to work within 2 days. If you perform heavy labor, you may be off from work up to 6 weeks. You should discuss this with your doctor.

When can I drive?

You may begin to drive when you feel that you can react quickly, and it is not painful to drive. **Do not drive while taking narcotic pain medicines.**

How long will my recovery take?

Your return to sports will depend on the amount of damage to your meniscus and the joint surface. We will explain this to you at your post-op visit. Most people do not return to high impact sports for about 4-6 weeks.

Follow-up visits should be made for 5-10 days after surgery depending on your surgeon. This appointment will be made at your work-up visit prior to surgery.

The Spanish version of this *Health Facts for You* is #5062s

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright ©12/2018. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5062.