

KNEE ARTHROSCOPY – POST OPERATIVE GUIDELINES

YOUR PROCEDURE

The procedure you have undergone is called an Arthroscopy. It involves examining the inside of your knee using an arthroscope (small telescope). This is done through two or more small punctures at the front of your knee. There are many procedures that can be done using this technique.

PAIN RELIEF

Managing pain in your knee after the operation is very important for comfort but also to speed up your recovery. During your procedure, your knee has been injected with Local Anaesthetic which will give you some pain relief for the first few hours. As this wears off, the pain can increase. You should take regular paracetamol (2 tablets every six hours). You may be prescribed something stronger such as Panadeine forte, Tramadol or Endone. Endone and Tramadol can be taken in addition to paracetamol. Panadeine forte is used instead of panadol. It is best to take the painkillers regularly before the pain becomes significant so that it is always under control.

SWELLING

Swelling is common after an arthroscopy. Fluid in the joint results in generalized swelling and is most obvious above the kneecap. Swelling is also common around the incisions and this can take some months to resolve. You may have been prescribed anti-inflammatory medication. These should be taken with food. If you get indigestion or have ongoing nausea, the anti-inflammatory tablets should be stopped.

Applying the R.I.C.E principles - rest, ice, compression and elevation will help minimize pain and swelling.

REST: During the first 3 days you should rest with your leg elevated as much as possible. You can then generally increase your activity, guided by your pain and swelling.

ICE: For the first week you should try to ice your knee 3 times a day for 20 minutes. After this time ice the knee following exercise and at the end of the day until your swelling reduces.

COMPRESSION: You will usually have a Tubi grip stocking around your knee. Sometimes you will have a bandage. The bandage can be replaced by a compression stocking on the day after surgery. The compression stocking should be worn during the day until your swelling reduces (usually about 2-4 weeks)

ELEVATION

DRESSINGS

Your knee will be bandaged up after the operation to minimize swelling. There is a crepe bandage with a cotton wool bandage underneath it. When showering, tape plastic bags around the knee to keep the bandages dry. Both of the bandages can be removed on the third day after your operation. There will be small waterproof dressings under this and they should be left in place until your postoperative review appointment.

If your dressings become wet or peel off, new dressings can be purchased from any pharmacy.

Some bleeding from the wounds is normal, if the dressing becomes soaked please change it.

CRUTCHES

Unless otherwise instructed you can place as much weight on the leg as comfortable with the help of crutches for the first 2 to 3 days following surgery.

To start with, the pattern of walking is 'crutches, bad leg, good leg'. Once you are more comfortable, the crutches and operated leg go forward together. You may find it easier to use just one crutch. Use it with the opposite arm i.e. for a left knee operation; use the crutch with your right arm.

To manage steps with crutches, use the following guide:

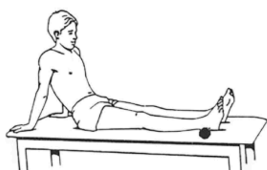
- UP - good leg, bad leg, crutches
- DOWN - crutches, bad leg, good leg

EXERCISES

Begin this exercise program the day after your operation and continue it for the first two weeks.

Knee locking using the quadriceps

With a rolled towel under your heel, tighten the quadriceps muscle at the front of your thigh and push your knee into the bed. Hold for 5 seconds and relax. Repeat 10 to 20 times, 2-3 times daily.



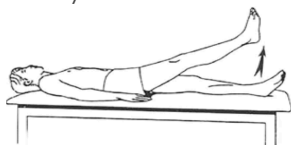
Knee bending

Slide your heel up towards your bottom as far as comfortable. Hold for 3 seconds. Repeat 10 times, 2-3 times a day. Gradually regain your full movement.



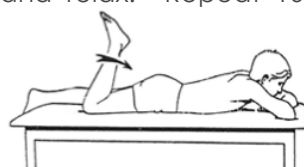
Straight leg raises

Lying flat, lock your knee straight and then lift the whole leg about 30cms off the bed. Hold for 3 seconds and relax. Repeat 10 to 20 times, 2-3 times a day.



Knee bending on your stomach

Begin this exercise about 3 days after your operation. Lie on your stomach and bend your knee as far as comfortable. Hold for 3 seconds and relax. Repeat 10 times, 2-3 times a day.



POST OPERATIVE REVIEW

You will usually have a review appointment with your surgeon within the first 2-3 weeks.

Returning to exercise

Progression of activities will be discussed at your review appointment.

The following list provides an approximate guide:

Driving	3-7 days
Exercise Bike	1-2 weeks
Swimming	2-4 weeks
Gym	2-4 weeks
Exercise walking	2-6 weeks
Golf	3-8 weeks
Running	4-8 weeks
Sport	6-8 weeks

Time off work

Sedentary	3-5 days
Manual	2-4 weeks