

## REHABILITATION AFTER ARTHROSCOPIC KNEE SURGERY

This protocol is a guideline for your **rehabilitation after arthroscopic knee surgery**. You may vary in your ability to do these exercises and to progress to full resumption of your previous activity. Please call the doctor if you are having a problem with your knee or the physical therapy line if you need clarification of these instructions.

### Phase one: The first week following surgery

#### Goals:

1. Control pain and swelling
2. Maintain knee motion
3. Activate the quadriceps muscles

#### Guidelines and Activities:

1. The **novocaine** that is put in your knee at the time of surgery lasts six to eight hours. Begin taking the pain medication when you start feeling sensation return. The knee will be painful for several days after the arthroscopy.
2. You can bear full weight and **walk** on the leg unless otherwise instructed by The doctor. In some instances, crutches can be used for a period of time if walking is uncomfortable.
3. Please make sure your incisions are checked regularly for signs of infection. If you notice drainage, redness, fevers, or flu-like symptoms, please call the office.  
You do not need a dressing after the first few days once the incision is dry. You may remove your dressing 48 hours after surgery.
4. Gently **move** the knee (flexion and extension) as much as you can to prevent stiffness.  
Do not place a pillow under the knee for comfort. This can lead to knee stiffness
5. Apply **cold** to reduce pain and swelling. Use ice on the knee 20 minutes/on and 20 minutes/off for the first day when awake. Then apply cold as often as needed for 15 to 20 minutes at a time for the next several days. Place a towel or cloth between the skin and the ice to prevent skin injury.
6. You may **shower** and get your incision wet. Do not soak the incision in a bathtub or Jacuzzi until the stitches have been removed.
7. Take an **aspirin** each morning.
8. You can wear an **elastic stocking** (TED) below the knee to prevent leg swelling, and do at least 10 ankle motion exercises each hour to control swelling and to help prevent phlebitis (blood clots in the veins).

## Exercise Program:

**QUADRICEPS SETTING** - to maintain muscle tone in the thigh muscles (quadriceps) and straighten the knee.



Lie on your back with your knee extended fully straight as in figure. Tighten and hold the front thigh muscles making the knee flat and straight. If done correctly, the kneecap will slide slightly upward toward the thigh muscles as the muscles contract. The tightening action of the quadriceps should make your knee straighten and be pushed flat against the bed or floor.

Hold for five seconds for each contraction. Do 20 repetitions whenever you think about it (many times a **HEEL PROP**- to straighten (extend) the knee. Lie on your back with a rolled up towel under your heel or sit in a chair with the heel on a stool as shown in the figure. Let the knee relax into extension (straight). If the knee will not straighten fully, you can place a weight (2 to 5 pounds) on the thigh, just above the kneecap.

Try to hold this position for **5 minutes, three times a day. While maintaining this extended position, practice quadriceps setting.**



**HEEL SLIDES** - to regain the bend (flexion) of the knee.

While lying on your back, actively slide your heel backward to bend the knee. Keep bending the knee until you feel a stretch in the front of the knee. Hold this bent position for five seconds and then slowly relieve the stretch and straighten the knee. While the knee is straight, you may repeat the quadriceps setting exercise.

Repeat exercise 20 times, three times a d



**SITTING HEEL SLIDES** -to regain the bend (flexion of the knee).

While sitting in a chair, slide the heel backward as if trying to get the foot underneath the chair. Hold five seconds and slowly relieve the stretch by sliding the foot forward. You can help with the opposite foot if necessary. Repeat exercise 20 times, three times a day.



**ANKLE PUMPS** - move the foot up and down to stimulate circulation in the leg.

Do at least 10 ankle pump exercises each hour.



## OFFICE VISIT

Please return to see the doctor approximately **one week to ten days** after your surgery. At this time, your sutures will be removed and your progress will be checked.

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