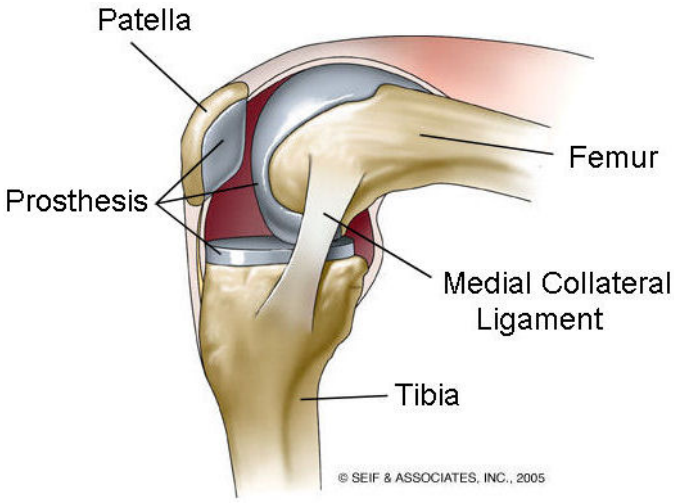
Knee Rehabilitation
Guidelines Following Surgery

Results after knee surgery are often greatly improved when you follow the exercise, range of motion and muscle strengthening exercises prescribed by your doctor. Safety measures are also important to protect the knee from further injury. **Any time any of these exercises cause you to have increased pain or swelling in your knee joint, decrease the amount until you are comfortable again and slowly increase them**. If you have problems or questions, call your caregiver or physical therapist for advice.



HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Remove items at home which could result in a fall. This includes throw rugs or furniture in walking pathways.
- Continue medications as instructed.
- You may shower or take tub baths when your staples or stitches are removed or as instructed.
- Walk using crutches or walker as instructed.
- Put weight on your legs and walk as much as is comfortable.
- You may resume a sexual relationship in one month or when given the OK by your doctor.
- Return to work as instructed by your doctor.
- Do not drive a car for 6 weeks or as instructed.
- Wear elastic stockings until instructed not to.
- Make sure you keep all of your appointments after your operation with all of your doctors and caregivers.

RANGE OF MOTION AND STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

Rehabilitation of the knee is important following a knee injury or an operation. After just a few days of immobilization, the muscles of the thigh which control the knee become weakened and shrink (atrophy). Knee exercises are designed to build up the tone and strength of the thigh muscles and to improve knee motion. Often times heat used for twenty to thirty minutes before working out will loosen up your tissues and help with improving the range of motion. These exercises can be done on a training (exercise) mat, on the floor, on a table or on a bed. Use what ever works the best and is most comfortable for you Knee exercises include:

- **Leg Lifts** - While your knee is still immobilized in a splint or cast, you can do straight leg raises. Lift the leg to 60 degrees, hold for 3 sec, and slowly lower the leg. Repeat 10-20 times 2-3 times daily. Perform this exercise against resistance later as your knee gets better.
- **Quad and Hamstring Sets** - Tighten up the muscle on the front of the thigh (Quad) and hold for 5-10 sec. Repeat this 10-20 times hourly. Hamstring sets are done by pushing the foot backward against an object and holding for 5-10 sec. Repeat as with quad sets.
- **Resistance and Weight exercises** - After your knee no longer needs to be immobilized, progressive motion, resistance, and weight lifting exercises should be performed. This is best done under the guidance of a physical therapist. You may safely start with wall squats; with your feet 10 inches from a wall, place your back flat against the wall and lower your trunk about 6 inches until you feel work in your thighs. Hold 20-40 seconds, then rise slowly. Do 3-6 repetitions 2-3 times daily.
- **Endurance Training** - Bicycle and walking are helpful in restoring strength and endurance to the leg.

A rehabilitation program following serious knee injuries can speed recovery and prevent re-injury in the future due to weakened muscles. Contact your doctor or a physical therapist for more information on knee rehabilitation.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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