



## POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: ACL RECONSTRUCTION

### ACTIVITY

- Crutches are provided, use them to help you walk and prevent falls for the first few days after surgery.
- Do not engage in prolonged periods of standing or walking during the first 7-10 days after surgery.
- Avoid long periods of sitting (without leg elevated) or long distance traveling for 2 weeks.

### BRACE

- **When walking or up and moving around, the knee brace must be on and locked straight at 0 degrees until you see your physical therapist;** they will unlock the brace at your first visit.
- When sleeping you must wear the brace for the first week, if necessary you may open it to 90 degrees of flexion for comfort.
- If you are sitting/lying down while awake/relaxing (reading a book, watching TV, etc) you may loosen the straps or remove the brace.

### DRESSINGS & INCISIONS

- The first two days after surgery you can expect a small amount of red-tinged drainage on your dressings. This is normal.
- Please keep the dressing clean and dry; if you are going to shower/bathe, you must protect the dressing. You may not soak in a pool, lake, hot tub, or the ocean until the sutures have been removed.
- You may remove the dressing 4 days after surgery (white cotton wrap, white gauze pads, and yellow gauze tape).
- You may apply Band Aids® to the incisions or leave them open to air.
- Please do not use Bacitracin® or other ointments on the incisions.

### PAIN & INFLAMMATION

- **Ice** - Apply ice bags wrapped in a dry towel several times per day for 20 minutes for the first week and then as needed for pain relief and inflammation.
- **Compression** - Use an ace wrap or the white stocking to decrease swelling. The white stocking should be worn for 5-7 days to prevent blood clots and decrease swelling in your knee.
- **Elevation** - Keep your foot **elevated above your heart** as much as possible for the first 3 to 4 days. Keep your leg elevated with a pillow under your calf or foot, **NOT under the knee**.
- **Pain Medication**- You have been given a prescription for pain control; please take as directed.
  - If you think you will require a refill on your medication, you **MUST** do so during our regular **weekday** office hours.
  - If you need additional pain medication you may take Tylenol 500-650mg every 4-6 hours. Do not take more than 3grams or 3000mg in a 24 hour period!
  - Common side effects of the pain medication are:
    - **NAUSEA:** To decrease nausea, take these medications with food.
    - **DROWSINESS:** Do not drive a car or operate machinery.
    - **ITCHING:** You may take Benadryl to alleviate any itching.
    - **CONSTIPATION:** To decrease constipation, use the stool softener provided (Docusate 250mg) or over-the-counter remedies (Mineral Oil, Milk of Magnesia, etc). Also avoid bananas, rice, apples, toast, or yogurt...as these foods can make you constipated. Getting up and moving around also helps with constipation and "waking up" your intestinal tract.
- Anti-inflammatory medications (Aleve, Ibuprofen, Naproxen, etc.) should **not** be taken for 2 weeks after surgery.

### EMERGENCIES

- Please have someone stay with you for the first 48 hours after surgery
- Please call the clinic or the orthopaedist on-call if:
  - Drainage from the incision soaks the dressings, expands, is foul-smelling; or your incisions are red, warm, and extremely painful
  - You develop a fever (>101.5°) or chills.
  - You experience leg or calf pain, leg swelling, or difficulty breathing.

### FOLLOW-UP CARE

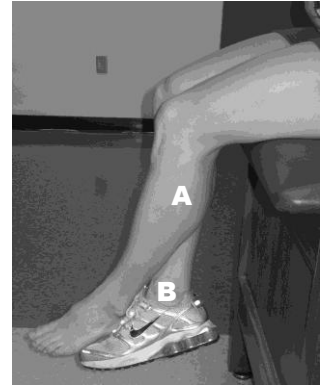
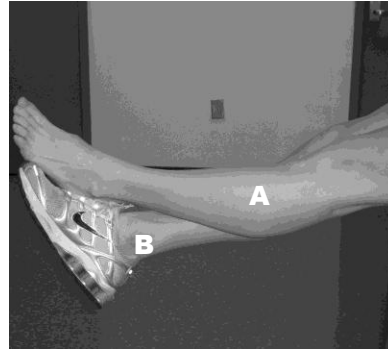
- Please **schedule a follow-up visit** for suture removal, and to review your surgery 10-14 days postoperatively.
- You should be scheduled to see your physical therapist in approximately 3-5 days after surgery.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL THE OFFICE (760-924-4084).**

**EXERCISES** – When you are comfortable and ready you may perform each exercise 2-3 times a day; it may help to take pain medication 20-30 minutes prior to the exercises and to apply ice after the exercises

**Flexion:**

1. Sit in a chair and remove or unlock your brace
2. Place your unoperated leg (B) under the foot of your operated leg (A)
3. Gently allow the knee to bend by doing ALL work with the unoperated leg (B)
4. When you reach your maximum bend, hold for 5 seconds
5. Use the unoperated leg (B) to straighten the knee  
**DO NOT ATTEMPT TO STRAIGHTEN YOUR LEG USING YOUR THIGH MUSCLES!**
6. Perform 10-20 times in a row
7. **Goal = 90° of flexion** (bending) by 2 weeks after surgery

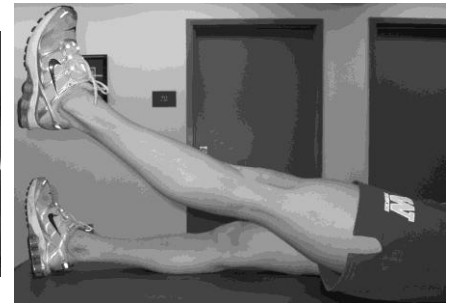
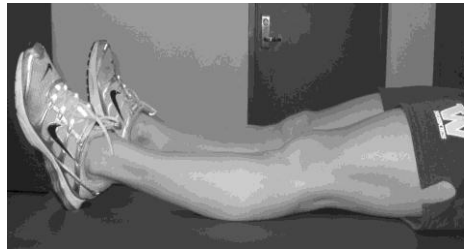


**Quadriceps Contractions:**

1. Sit or lie on the floor with your operated leg straight
2. Place a towel roll under the knee
3. Tighten your thigh and hamstring muscles, causing you to press your knee downward into the towel roll
4. Hold this position for 10 seconds
5. Relax your thigh and hamstring muscles
6. Perform 2-3 sets of 10

**Straight Leg Raises:**

1. Lie on the floor with your **brace on and locked**
2. Perform a quadriceps contraction (as stated in the above exercise)
3. Raise your foot about 6-12" off the floor
4. Slowly lower your leg back to the floor
5. Relax your thigh muscle
6. Perform 2-3 sets of 10



**Ankle Pumps:**

1. Point toes downward and hold for 5 seconds
2. Point toes upward and hold for 5 seconds
3. Perform 2-3 sets of 10

