

After you leave hospital

Your knee may still be painful, once you have left hospital. Continue to take your painkillers as prescribed. This should help to control the pain and enable you to move your knee as much as possible.

Swelling around your knee is normal. This can remain for up to 12 weeks following surgery. Using ice packs at this stage may still help to reduce swelling. Raising your leg at night and when you are resting may also help. Place a pillow under your heel to raise your leg. **Do not place it under your knee.**

Watch out for your knee wound becoming more swollen or redder/hotter than normal. Also monitor any new numbness, tingling or discolouration in your foot, which lasts for more than 24 hours. If you notice any of these symptoms, contact your GP or NHS Direct (see back cover) for details.

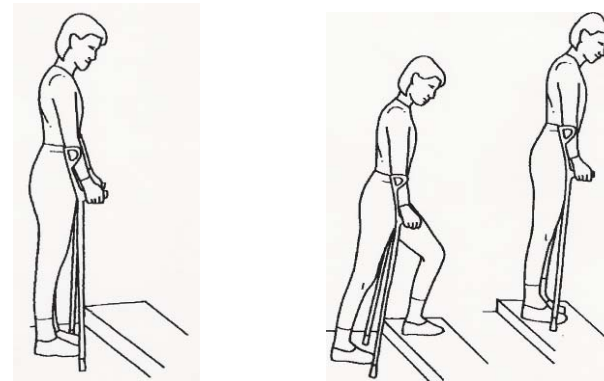
If you have any other illnesses in the first six weeks after you leave hospital, for example flu or a tooth abscess, contact your GP. It is important that any new infections are monitored while you are recovering from your surgery.

Physiotherapy advice following total knee replacement surgery

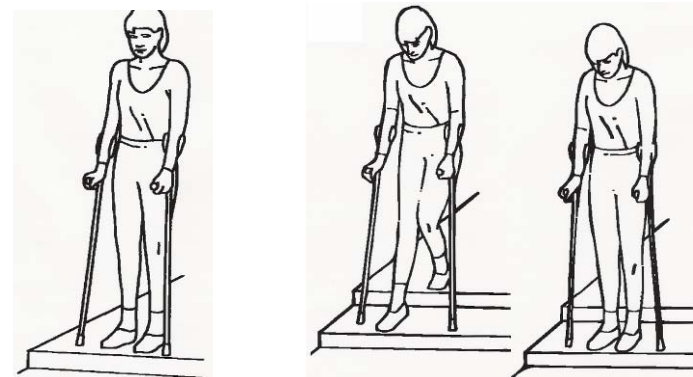
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Instructions for stairs: stairs without a rail

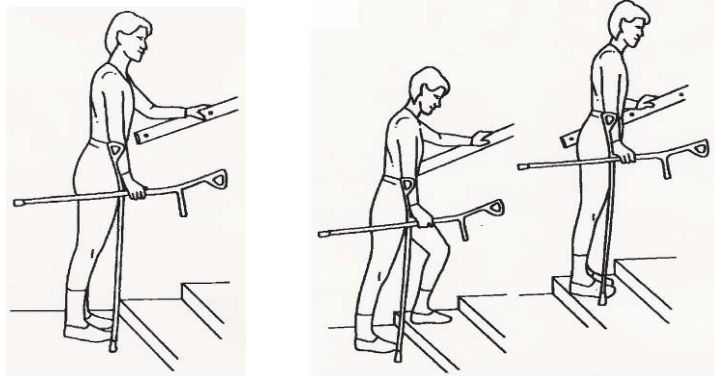


- Walking up stairs, stand with your crutches close to the stairs. First take a step up with your good leg. Then take a step up with your operated leg. Then bring your crutches up on the step.

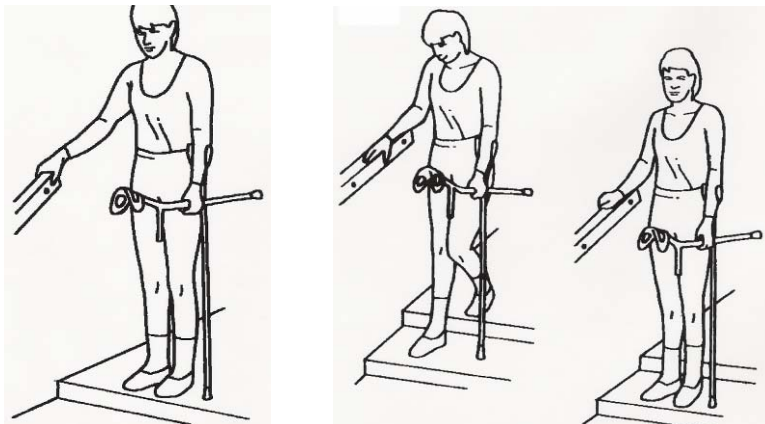


- Walking down the stairs, put your crutches one step down first. Then take a step down with your operated leg. Then step down with your good leg onto the same step as your operated leg.

Instructions for stairs: stairs with a rail



- Walking up stairs, hold onto the handrail with one hand and the crutches with the other hand. First take a step up with your good leg. Then step up with your operated leg. Then bring your crutch up onto the step.



- Walking down the stairs, put your crutch one step down first. Step down with your operated leg. Then step down with your good leg onto the same step.

About this leaflet

This leaflet has been written for

It aims to help you understand the benefits of physiotherapy following a total knee replacement. It contains exercises and advice to help you recover to the best of your ability, and provides guidance so that you know what to expect.

Although the physiotherapy team and hospital staff will help you with your rehabilitation, it is important that **you** take an active role in this process. You can help your recovery by:

- managing pain and swelling
- doing your exercises regularly
- moving around frequently.

Following surgery (back on the ward)

Rehabilitation begins as soon as possible after your operation. If you return to the ward in the afternoon, you will be assessed by a physiotherapist to see if you are able to stand and take a few steps with your new knee with their help.

You will be given compression stockings to wear or have a pump which inflates pads to compress your feet. These help to maintain circulation and prevent blood clots after your operation but do not restrict you moving your legs. You may also have a small drain which removes extra fluid from your wound. There will be some pain, swelling and bruising which is normal.

Moving your new knee

It is important to move your knee as soon as possible after the operation unless your surgeon or physiotherapist tells you not to. This will minimise stiffness, pain and swelling, and reduce the formation of scar tissue.

General exercise

Walking is a good way to build up and maintain the strength in your leg muscles. You should gradually increase the distance that you walk each day progressing to 30 minutes or two lots of 15 minutes a day. Walking also improves your balance, and heart and lung fitness.

When you can walk well without limping and feel confident, you can stop using your walking aids. If you are walking for long distances or in busy places you may still find them useful.

Information about your exercises

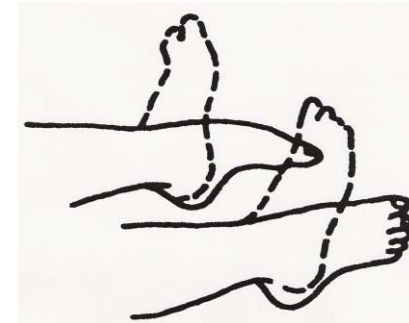
How often should I do my exercises?

For the first three weeks you should do your exercises at least three times throughout the day. You do not have to do them all at the same time. After three weeks you can do all the exercises for the suggested number of repetitions or holding time, at least three days a week. This will help to maintain and improve the movement and strength you have gained.

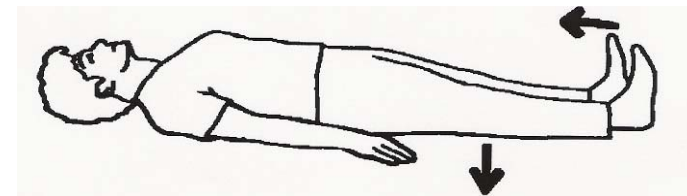
The exercises in this booklet are designed to improve your new knee's movement and increase your muscle strength. They also increase your circulation, preventing blood clots, and reduce swelling. Exercises will reduce the formation of scar tissue inside your knee joint and improve the mobility of the scar tissue that forms as your wound heals. This is important to make sure that you maintain a good range of movement in your knee joint. It will make daily activities, such as getting up from a chair or toilet seat, or getting in and out of a car, less painful.

Day 1 exercises

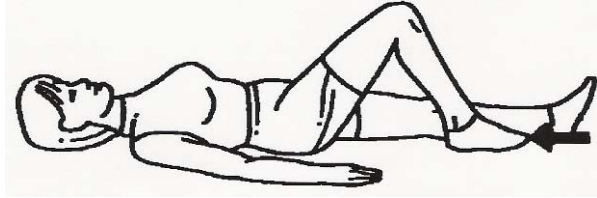
Your physiotherapist will initially assess your knee and teach you the following exercises. You can then continue the exercises on your own, as advised.



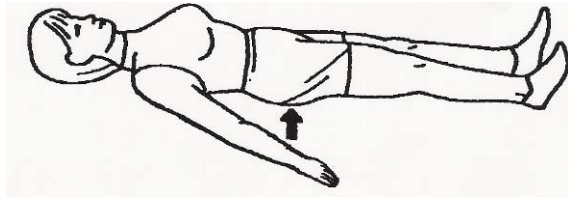
- Lying on your back or sitting down, bend and straighten your ankles briskly. Repeat 20 times. This exercise is important to prevent blood clots forming.



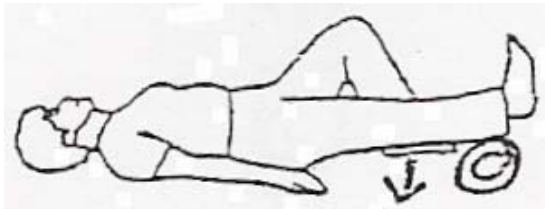
- Lying on your back with legs straight, bend your ankles up and push your knees down firmly against the bed. Hold for five seconds, then relax for five seconds. Repeat 10 times.



- Lying on your back, bend and straighten your leg. Repeat 10 times. This exercise may be painful initially but be reassured it will not harm your wound.



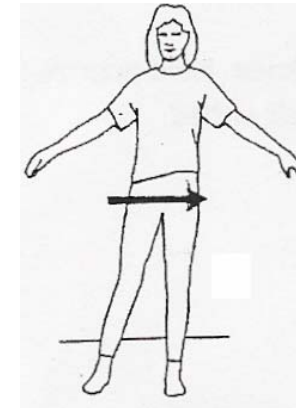
- Squeeze your buttocks firmly together. Hold for five seconds then relax for five seconds. Repeat 10 times. This exercise will also prevent blood clots forming. Repeat every hour when you are awake.



- Place a rolled towel under the heel. Fully straighten your knee by pushing the back of your knee towards the bed. Hold for three to five seconds then relax. Repeat 10 times.

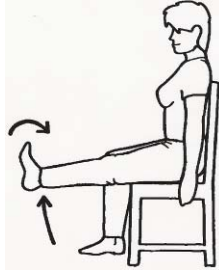


- Stand with your operated knee slightly bent. Straighten your knee and at the same time pull your bottom in. Hold five seconds. Repeat 10 times.

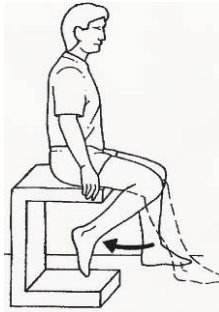


- Holding onto a stable surface, push up onto your toes, raising your heels. Repeat 10 times.

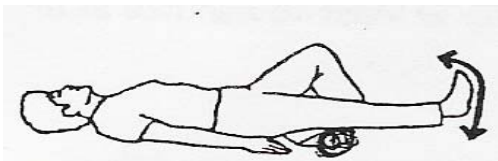
Transfer your weight from one leg to the other. Start holding on for support initially. Repeat 10 times.



- Sit in a chair. Make sure your thigh is supported. Pull up your toes, tighten your thigh muscle and straighten your knee. Hold for five seconds then relax. Repeat 10 times.



- Bend your knee as much as possible. Alternatively, cross your healthy leg over your operated leg and pull your operated leg back towards you. Repeat 10 times.



- Straighten your knee and pull your foot up from a bent position, resting on a towel. Hold five seconds. Repeat 10 times.

Moving around after your operation

Everyone recovers from their operation at a different rate. Below is a general guideline as to what you can expect to be doing each day:

Day:

- 0-1** Move around the bed and with help from your physiotherapist, sit on the edge of the bed. Get out of bed, stand up and step around to sit in a chair.
- 1-2** Walk with a frame or crutches, helped by your physiotherapist and afterwards the nursing staff.
- 2-3** Walk by yourself with the frame or crutches.
- 3-4** Walk by yourself with crutches. Go up and down the stairs with or without a hand rail and physiotherapist supervision. Progress to walking with two sticks, initially with help from your physiotherapist and then on your own.

Progressing

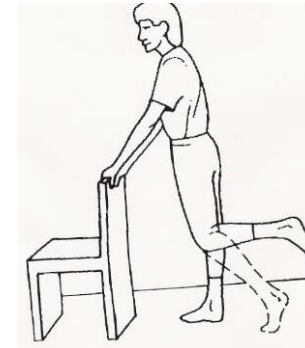
If swelling is restricting your knee movement and limiting your mobility, you may be given a cryocuff (ice pack). Your physiotherapist will tell you how often and for how long to apply ice to your knee. Ice cooling helps to reduce pain, swelling and stiffness.

If your knee is not bending to 90 degrees within two to three days, you may also be advised to use a continuous passive movement (CPM) machine. This will bend and straighten your leg while you are resting in bed. However, you still need to continue with your active exercises to strengthen your muscles.

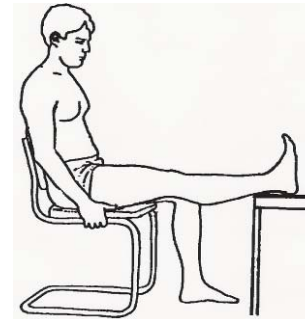
It is important that pain does not restrict your walking or exercises. If you are in pain, tell the nurses. They can check your pain relief and see whether you need different or stronger painkillers.

Progression exercises (after day 1)

Your physiotherapist will teach you the following exercises when you are ready to progress.



- Bend your knee and lift your foot off the floor. Hold for five seconds. Repeat 10 times.



- Sitting in a chair, support your leg on a chair/stool. Rest in this position for 15 minutes at a time. Repeat this at least three times a day.

Contact us

Pharmacy medicines helpline

For information about any medicines that you have been prescribed at Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals, you can speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

t: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' t: 020 7188 8803 at Guy's e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Knowledge & Information Centre (KIC)

For more information about health conditions, support groups and local services, or to search the internet and send emails, please visit the KIC on the Ground Floor, North Wing, St Thomas' Hospital.

t: 020 7188 3416

Language support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815 fax: 020 7188 5953

NHS Direct

Offers health information and advice from specially trained nurses over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 0845 4647 w: www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

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A **follow-up physiotherapy** outpatient appointment will ideally be arranged within one to two weeks after you leave hospital. This is to help you continue to develop your strength, knee movement and walking ability. It will also give you an opportunity to discuss any concerns that have arisen since you left hospital.

You may be able to **drive** six to eight weeks after your operation, but will need to follow your surgeon's advice. Always check with your insurance company before driving after your surgery as they may refuse to meet a claim if they feel you have driven too soon.

Your physiotherapist or surgeon can give you advice about returning to **active** or **sporting hobbies**. Bowls, gardening, swimming (once stitches/clips removed and wound is dry), cycling, golf and walking are highly recommended.

Returning to work depends upon how physically demanding your job is. Your surgeon will advise you about this.

Additional information

You should be able to kneel with your knees at right angles after your surgery, for example for gardening or cleaning. This may be painful and uncomfortable to start with, and may take weeks to achieve, but this should improve with time. You will **not** be able to kneel back and rest on your heels as this will put too much stress on your knee joint.

Extra/specific advice and exercises:

Your follow-up appointment

- Ward name:

- Ward telephone number:

- I have been referred to:

for follow-up/outpatient physiotherapy.