

Post-Operative Instructions: Arthroscopy

DRESSING CHANGES

The skin tapes will be changed and recovered with wound closure strips two to three days after surgery. This will be done by the nurse. Keep the skin dry for one full week, or until sutures have been removed, then allow the water in the shower to run over the skin tapes until they fall off on their own.

DO NOT SOAK OR SCUB INCISIONS FOR TWO FULL WEEKS.

ACTIVITY

You can walk and bend as pain will allow. **Do not push your activity past reasonable pain.**

Slowly increase your activity over the next few weeks. Start each new activity carefully and slowly build up.

EXERCISES

Building up the muscles that support your knee and improving joint mobility are the best ways to speed your recovery. Your surgeon may have you try limited walking and exercise several times a day. Use slow, steady movements and always exercise *both* legs to keep your muscles balanced. Ask about low impact exercises like swimming and bicycling.

1. See the exercise instruction sheet on reverse side of this page.
2. Use the exercise bike 8 to 10 days after surgery if the swelling is down. Raise the seat of the bike and take the pedal tension down to level one or two. Only ride for a few minutes the first day (up to five minutes). Slowly, over the next two weeks, increase your time and tension, and lower your seat level back to normal as you are able.
3. If you notice any increase in pain or swelling, it is probably related to what you did the day before. Take a day off from exercising to recuperate. Elevate, ice, and rest your knee. Start back at half the exercise you were doing previously and slowly build back up.

AT HOME RECOVERY

Elevate your knee, exercise, and follow your surgeon's instructions. To check your progress, your surgeon may see you one or two times during the first few weeks after arthroscopy. Call your surgeon if you have bleeding, pain uncontrolled by pain medication, fever, numbness, or shortness of breath.

RELIEVING PAIN

Don't dangle your leg for long periods. Elevate your knee above heart level to reduce swelling and pain. Ice and rest can also help. During the first two days after arthroscopy, ice your knee 20 to 30 minutes a few times a day. Straighten your knee several times a day while you heal.

SHOWERING

Wait to take your first shower until you can stand comfortably for 10 to 15 minutes. Cover your leg with plastic tied above your dressing to avoid getting your bandage and incisions wet, which can increase the chances of infection.

PHYSICAL THERAPY

Depending on your needs, your surgeon may refer you to a Physical Therapist—a specialist in the rehabilitation of joints. A Physical Therapist can design a personalized exercise program to help improve your muscle strength and joint function.

INITIAL EXERCISE PROGRAM*

Hamstring Contraction

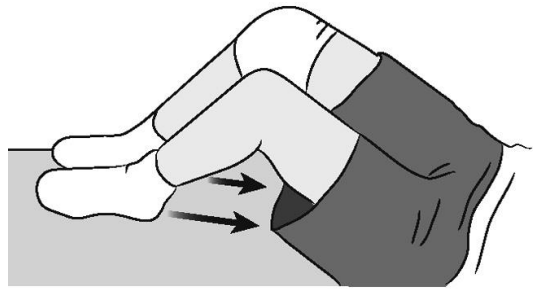
No movement should occur in this exercise.

Lie or sit with your knees bent to about 10 degrees.

Pull your heels into the floor, tightening the muscles on the back of your thigh.

Hold for 5 seconds, then relax.

Repeat 10 times.



Quadriceps Contraction

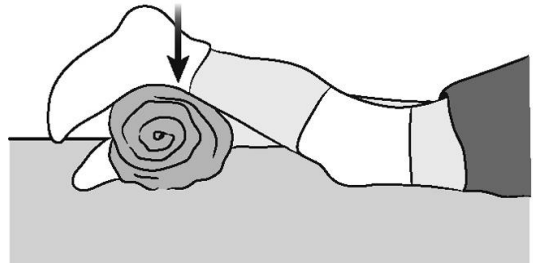
Lie on stomach with a towel roll under the ankle of your involved knee.

Push ankle down into the towel roll.

Your leg should straighten as much as possible.

Hold for 5 seconds, then relax.

Repeat 10 times.



Straight Leg Raises

Lie on your back, with your uninvolved knee bent.

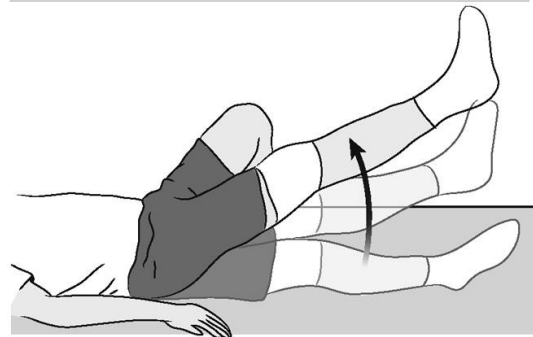
Straighten your involved knee.

Slowly lift leg about 6 inches, then hold for 5 seconds.

Continue lifting in 6-inch increments, holding each time.

Reverse the procedure, and return to the starting position.

Repeat 10 times.

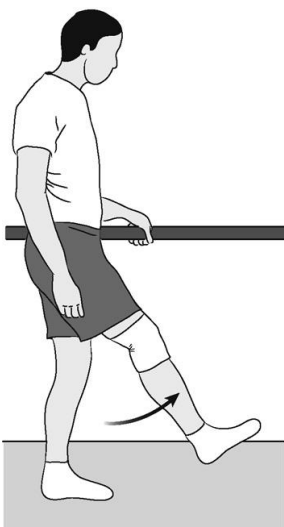
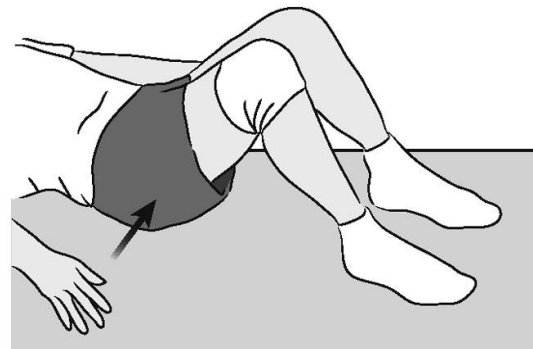


Buttock Tucks

While lying down on your back, tighten your buttock muscles.

Hold tightly for 5 seconds, then relax.

Repeat 10 times.



Straight Leg Raises, Standing

Support yourself, if necessary, and slowly lift your involved leg forward keeping your knee straight.

Return to the starting position.

Repeat 10 times.

*Source: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons