

orthoNY

ACL RECONSTRUCTION REHABILITATION

One of the most common complications following ACL reconstruction is loss of motion, especially loss of extension. Loss of knee extension has been shown to result in a limp, quadriceps muscle weakness and anterior knee pain. Studies have demonstrated that the timing of ACL rehabilitation has a significant influence on the development of postoperative knee stiffness.

GOALS: Control pain and swelling, care for the knee and dressing. Early range of motion exercises, achieve and maintain full passive extension. Re-establish quadriceps muscle control and gait training.

Follow the guidelines within this section for **the first seven days after your surgery**. It is extremely important that you work on extension immediately. Attempt to achieve full range of motion (extension) as soon as possible. Remove the brace every 2-3 hours to perform the following exercises.

Exercises:

The following exercises are to be started **the evening of surgery or the day after surgery**. While exercise is important, don't over-do it.

- **Straight Leg Raise:** This exercise should be done while wearing the brace. Raise leg 12 inches off the bed, couch or chair. Hold in position for a count of 10 seconds. Do 10 repetitions, 3 sets per day.



- **Quad sets:** This exercise should be done while wearing the brace. Sitting with your leg straight, pull your toes toward your nose and tighten your thigh (flexing your quadriceps muscles). Hold for a count of 10 seconds. Do 10 repetitions, 3 sets per day.



- **Foot pumps:** This exercise should be done while wearing the brace. Sitting with your leg straight; alternate pointing your toes to the floor “pushing on the gas pedal” and pulling your toes toward your nose. Do 30 repetitions, 3 sets per day.



- **Heel Slides:** This exercise should be done while not wearing the brace. Sitting with your legs out straight slowly bend the operative leg with the heel staying in contact with the table/ground. Use hands placed at the thigh for support. Do 15 repetitions, 3 sets per day.



- **Towel Rolls:** This exercise should be done without wearing the brace. Sitting with your leg straight; place a rolled towel under your leg just above the ankle. Make sure nothing is resting behind your knee. Do for 20 minutes, 3 sets per day.



- **Passive Knee Flexion:** This exercise should be done without wearing the brace. Sit on the edge of a bed or table and let gravity gently bend the knee. The opposite leg is used to support and control the amount of bending. It is important to achieve at least 90 degrees of passive flexion by 2 weeks after surgery. Do 10 repetitions, 3 sets per day.

