Total knee replacement
Inpatient and home exercises

Information for patients
MSK Orthopaedic Inpatients (Therapy)
When you go home from hospital following your knee replacement, a referral will be made for you to receive an outpatient physiotherapy appointment through the post or by telephone.

Whilst you wait for this appointment it is very important that you continue with the exercises given to you by your physiotherapist. This is to avoid your knee stiffening up and the muscles becoming weak.

You can also find other useful exercises in the booklet 'Total knee replacement surgery' (PIL308). You should have been given this booklet at your initial outpatient appointment; alternatively you can find a copy on our website www.sth.nhs.uk/patients/patient-information.

Advice for exercises after a knee replacement

- Ensure you take regular painkillers to allow you to continue your exercises
- Some discomfort is OK, but do not push so hard that it causes pain
- We recommend/advise you exercise regularly and try to build up to 4 times a day after discharge home
- After exercises are complete, any increase in discomfort should settle down again (back to previous level within 15 minutes) if not then you are pushing too hard
- Use the Cryocuff regularly to help with the swelling and pain
- Remember you may not be able to do as much as the day before
- Each day gradually increase the distance that you are walking. Ensure you are getting enough rest between walking and exercising
- Before discontinuing using your walking aids please discuss this with your doctor or physiotherapist
Use of the Cryocuff

When you leave hospital, you will take your blue Cryocuff knee ice pack with you full of water. Put the cuff into your fridge and use it as an ice pack after exercise or when the knee swells at home. Do not put the cuff into the freezer as it can cause freezer burns.

Bed exercises

Ankle dorsiflexion/plantarflexion

1. Lying on your back or sitting.
2. Bend and straighten your ankles briskly. If you keep your knees straight during the exercise you will feel a gentle stretch up your calf muscles.
Static quads

1. Lying on your back with your legs straight.
2. Bend your ankles and push your knees down firmly against the bed.
   Hold for 5 seconds – relax.

Knee flexion

1. Lying on your back bend and straighten your operated leg to comfort.
**Inner range quadriceps**

1. Sitting on your bed with your leg stretched out in front of you, put a rolled up towel or pillow under your knee.
2. Lifting your heel up from the bed hold for 5 seconds then relax.

![Image of inner range quadriceps exercise]

**Straight leg raise**

1. Lying on your back tighten your thigh muscles up and pull your toes towards you.
2. Raise your operated leg up off the bed and slowly lower.

![Image of straight leg raise exercise]
Chair exercises

Knee extensions

1. Pull your toes up tighten your thigh muscle and straighten your knee.

2. Hold for approximately 5 seconds and slowly relax your leg.

Gravity assisted knee extension

1. Spend some time every day sat in a chair with your foot up on a stool with a gap under your knee. This will allow gravity to help straighten your knee.

2. If your knee becomes too uncomfortable pull the stool closer to you for a short while to support the back of your knee, before pushing it back out once the pain has eased.

3. If this position isn’t too sore try pushing your knee downwards using your thigh muscle.
Foot slides

1. Sat in a chair place a plastic bag under the foot of your operated leg.
2. Slide your foot backwards and forwards bending the knee.
3. Start off with small movements to loosen the knee.
4. You can help the knee bend by pulling backwards with the other foot.
5. Remove the plastic bag from under your foot before you attempt to stand.
**Sit - stand knee bend**

1. Stand in front of a chair with arm rests reach back with your hands for support and without moving your feet forwards, bend your knees until you can feel a stretch at the front of your knee.

2. Hold for a few seconds and then stand up again.
Standing exercises

Perform these exercises with a chair behind you so you can rest if required.

Mini squats

1. Stand holding onto a firm surface.
2. Slowly bend your hips and knees, trying to push your bottom back.
3. Stand up tightening your buttock muscles.

Calf raises

1. Stand holding onto a chair or worktop, push up onto your toes and slowly lower.
Do...

- Your exercises daily until you feel that you have returned to your normal level of function
- Gradually increase the number of repetitions of each exercise
- Stop the exercises if your resting pain is increasing and contact your physiotherapist
- Continue using pain relief to allow you to perform your exercises
- Continue using your Cryocuff to reduce swelling and control your pain

Do not...

- Do all your exercises in one session, split them up throughout the day
- Repeat the exercises until you have allowed some rest after the last exercise
- Put a pillow under your knee in bed
- Do not wait to start your exercises in outpatient physiotherapy you are in control of the best outcome of your surgery. Start your exercises as soon as you get home.

Your physiotherapist will progress your exercises when you leave hospital and aim to improve your walking and reduce your reliance on walking aids.
Balancing activity and rest after you leave hospital

After any period of immobility due to injury, illness or an operation your exercise tolerance will be lower and you will be more at risk of circulatory problems.

Try to remain as active and mobile as you can after discharge from hospital, this helps to maintain good circulation and joint and muscle health.

Take adequate periods of rest through the day to aid recovery.

Try to do shorter periods of activity more often rather than too much in one go.

Progress your activity levels gradually and progressively as your recovery allows.
Where can I find further information?

Here are some useful contacts that you might require when you leave hospital:

**Active Recovery** 0114 305 4321  
A Sheffield based community rehabilitation team

**ADDs** 0114 226 6723  
Accelerated Discharge Dementia Service

**City Wide Alarms** 0114 242 0351

**SCELS** 0114 226 3800  
Sheffield Community Equipment and Loan Service

**Social Services Equipment and Adaptations** 0114 273 4709

**South Yorkshire Housing Handy Person Service** 0114 256 4270

**Mobility and Specialised Rehabilitation Centre** 0114 271 5807

**Access Team for Carer Support** 0114 273 4908

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