

ACL Surgery Instruction Sheet

Dr. Solberg's Office Number is **213-455-8448**

This information should be useful after your knee surgery. Please read this information carefully. You will receive further instructions at your next visit. The following items are what to expect and what to do for the first week after surgery.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

Expect your knee to be quite stiff for the first few days. Stay off the affected leg as much as possible for the first 48 hours. You may begin to put weight on the leg after the first day with your immobilizer on.

Keep your leg elevated above your heart as much as possible for the first week after surgery.

Apply ice to your knee for the first 48 hours after surgery. Wrap the ice in two bags to avoid getting the bandage wet. You may use ice packs longer if they help the pain. If you have a cold pack set up, make sure it is filled with ice water.

You should expect some swelling in the foot and discoloration in the leg on the affected side, this is perfectly normal.

PAIN CONTROL AND MEDICATION

Many patients have a block or regional anesthetic for pain control after surgery. This produces numbness in the involved leg and is very good at relieving pain after surgery. The block often lasts 12-24 hours before it

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wears off, which can occur fairly quickly. The first sign the block is wearing off is tingling in your toes and foot, the same type of feeling you have when you lay on your hand and it "falls asleep". It is very important to have pain medication in your system when the block is wearing off to avoid having excessive pain. I recommend you take an extra dose of the pain medication as soon as you feel tingling in your foot or toes.

Take your pain medication as directed by your prescription. Do not wait until the pain is intolerable to take the medication. It will take between 30-60 minutes to begin working, so take it accordingly. In addition to your prescription, recommend combining it with an anti-inflammatory medication either Advil, Motrin or Aleve for an additive or synergistic effect (the effect of the two medications together is more than the effect of the individual medications). Over the counter Advil or Aleve work as well as prescription ibuprofen or naproxen (the generic form) and can be safely taken with your prescription. For Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) take 3 tablets (600 mg) every 8 hours as needed and for Naproxen (Aleve) take two tablets (440 mg) every 12 hours. Do not take both ibuprofen and naproxen, rather choose one or the other. Make sure you take these medications with food to avoid stomach upset.

WOUND CARE

Take the bandage off after 3 days. The incisions may continue to ooze a small amount. Leave the tape strips on the wounds. You can shower after 3 days and get the area around the incisions wet. You can wash the skin with soap and water but don't soak your knee in a bath or swimming pool. If the oozing from the incisions has stopped and they are dry, you can leave the bandages off. If there is still oozing, cover the incisions with a clean dry piece of gauze.

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Don't wrap your knee tightly with a compressive bandage such as an ace wrap. This will inhibit the blood from returning from your lower leg and will cause a lot of swelling in the lower part of your leg and foot. Instead, wrap the knee loosely—just tight enough to hold the bandages on without falling off. You can readjust it several times to make sure its comfortable.

ACTIVITY AND EXERCISES

Begin to gently bend and straighten the knee as soon as you can. Your motion should improve a little bit every day. You should be able to fully straighten the knee and bend to about 90 degrees (roughly a right angle) by the time of your first office visit after surgery. Be sure to spend at least 15 minutes each day working on completely straightening your knee. This part is critical to resuming normal walking.

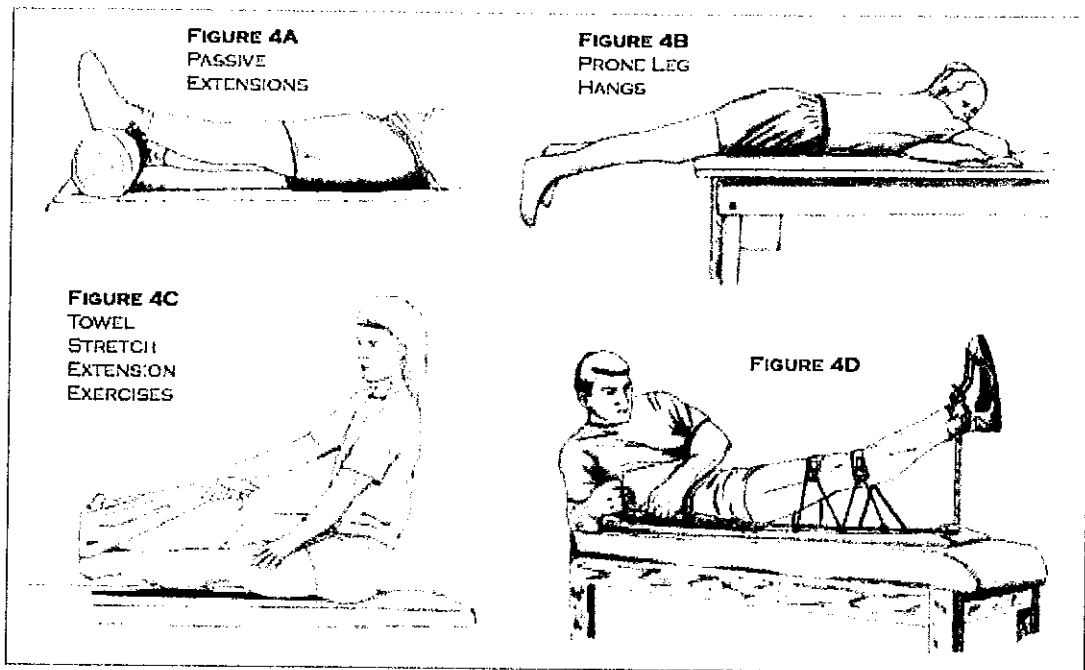
Don't put your full weight on your knee until you come back for your post op visit (about 10-14 days). Your quadriceps muscle (the large muscle in the front of you thigh) will shut down for a couple of days after surgery. If you walk too soon, this muscle may not work properly causing a fall-this could damage the ligament reconstruction. So before I let you put your full weight on your leg, I want to make sure this muscle is functioning properly.

I've included some exercises below that you can start doing in the first few days after surgery. You should do these 2-3 times a day for about 5 minutes at a time. The first panel shows exercises that you can do to regain extension (the ability to fully straighten your leg)

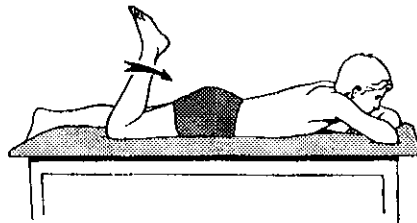
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The next exercise is used to gain flexion or the ability to bend your knee. I think you should do these stretches in the prone position (on your stomach) to keep you from cheating by flexing your hip. Get someone to help stretch your leg and the goal is to get your heel to touch your buttock.



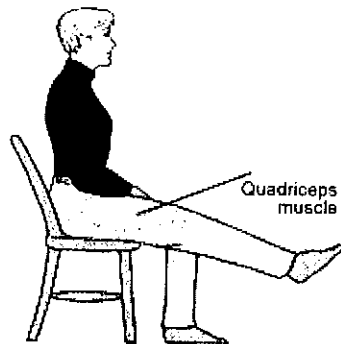
The next exercise is called a straight leg lifts which you can start to do after 3-4 days. Start by sitting or lying on the floor, tightening your leg muscles and straightening your leg(exercises 1 and 2). Lift your leg about 6 inches off the floor and hold it for 3 seconds. Slowly lower your leg back down. Do this 20-30 times in the morning and

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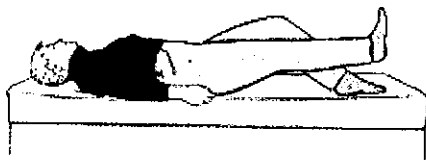
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evening. This will condition the quadriceps to start working again. The second exercise is either sitting or laying and you tighten your thigh muscles and try to push the back of your knee downward against the floor (exercise 3). This helps to get full extension which is important for walking.



1. Straight-leg raise: sitting



2. Straight-leg raise: lying



3. Muscle stretch



Call Dr. Solberg's Office if you notice any of the following symptoms: You may be connected with an associate if you are calling in the evening hours. Have your discharge orders and description of your procedure available.

Temperature over 101° Fahrenheit

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Increasing, severe pain in the knee/leg

Increasing redness around the incisions

You have been prescribed pain medication which has a number of side effects. Most common are drowsiness, nausea and or vomiting, itching, constipation and irritability. If these are prolonged or severe, your pain medication may need to be changed. You must contact our office during business hours to have a prescription refilled or a new prescription dispensed. After hours (after 5:00 pm or weekends), the **on call doctor will not give you a refill** or a new pain medication prescription.

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