

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS - ACL RECONSTRUCTION

Post- op guide

- Brace locked in extension when ambulating until able to do straight-leg raise
- Full weight-bearing with crutches unless otherwise specified
- Wean crutches with assistance from PT
- Brace for 1 month whenever active

BRACE / MOVEMENT

Getting your knee into full extension is very important. Perform knee **straightening exercises** 4 times per day for 20 min. by propping your heel onto rolled towel and allowing it to stretch. You may bend your knee as much as tolerated, gradually increasing daily. Lock the brace in extension while ambulating until you are able to do a straight-leg raise. Use your brace when walking for the first month, and crutches for the first few weeks until cleared by PT. Limit standing and walking based on swelling and pain. Perform **straight-leg raise exercises** to help with quad strength (with assistance as needed).

ICE

Use ice to help decrease swelling and pain after your surgery. May use at intervals of 20 minutes ON with at least 30 minutes OFF. Do not use ice while you are sleeping. If you received an ice machine, you can use 30 minutes at a time. You should use the ice machine for approximately two weeks.

In addition, elevate your leg, toes above your nose. This will help reduce swelling.

MEDICATIONS

If you were given a nerve block for anesthesia, it will wear off over 18-24 hours. During this time, you will have little to no feeling in the body part where you had surgery. If an injection of local anesthesia was injected into your wound, this will wear off in 5-6 hours. Therefore, begin taking the **pain medication** (e.g. Tramadol, Norco, Percocet) when you begin to have pain to prevent you from having severe pain. Take the pain medication as needed, every 4-6 hours. Take a **stool softener** until you are having normal bowel movements. If you are given a prescription for **Aspirin** to help thin your blood and prevent blood clots, take as directed.

The day after surgery you can take 600 mg of **Ibuprofen** (Advil/Motrin) every 6 hours to help with inflammation and pain. This will help cut down the use of narcotic-based pain medication.

DRESSING / BANDAGES

Keep your dressing clean and dry. You may remove the dressing 3 days after surgery and replace with waterproof band-aids. Your stitches will likely be dissolvable and under the skin; leave the steri-strips in place, they will fall off after about a week. It is okay to shower and let your incisions get wet 3 days after surgery. Until then, wrap with plastic to shower. No submerging in bathtub for 2 weeks.

DRIVING

You may not drive with your operative leg until advised by physician.

APPOINTMENT

At your first post-operative visit within 1 week, you will be given a prescription for physical therapy.