

# Following your knee replacement



## Following your operation

When you leave hospital you may go home alone or to stay with family or friends. You may decide this following discussions with your medical advisers and therapists who will talk to you about your home situation, the amount of assistance you have at home, the rate of your progress and your physical condition.

The tissues and muscles surrounding your knee will take time to heal. It is important to take extra care for the first few weeks following your operation.

When you get home you will be able to:

- walk with walking aids
- use the stairs
- get on and off the bed
- have a home exercise programme.

At home you should continue these exercises regularly. You may need to attend for physiotherapy at your local physiotherapy department.

## Walking up and down the stairs

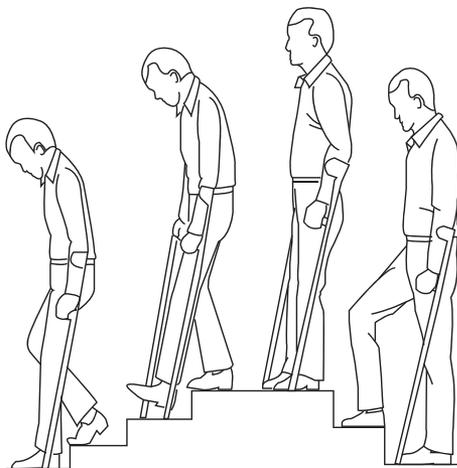
Take one step at a time. Hold the hand rail if there is one available. Then take both of your crutches/sticks in your other hand as shown by your physiotherapist.

Walking up:

1. Unoperated leg
2. Operated leg
3. Crutches/sticks

Walking down:

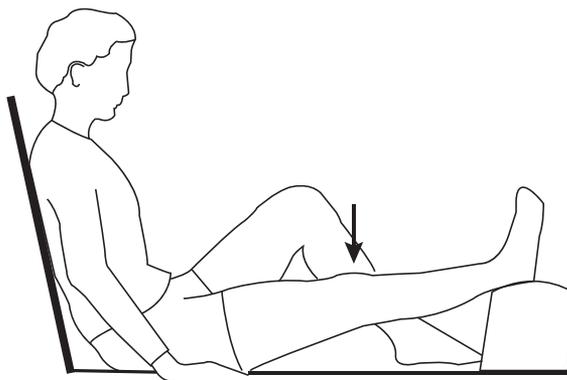
1. Crutches/sticks
2. Operated leg
3. Unoperated leg



## Exercises for your operated leg

### Passive knee stretches

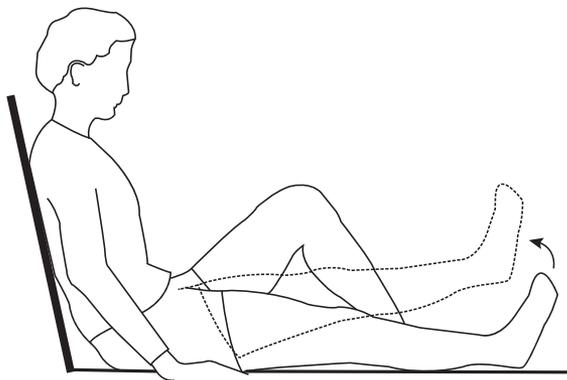
Sit or lie on a firm surface such as your bed or the floor with your leg out in front of you. Put your heel up on a block or pillow so that your knee hangs in mid-air. Let your knee stretch for five minutes, or less if it is too painful.



Repeat this exercise once, twice a day.

### Straight leg raise

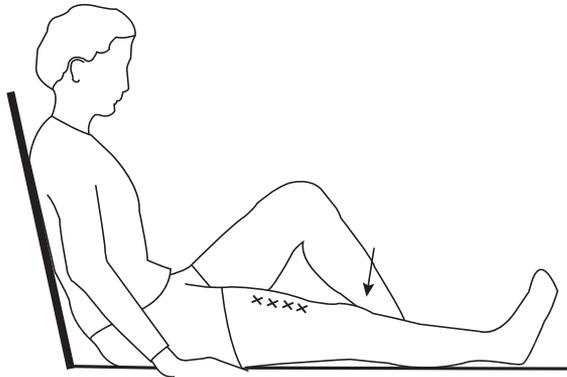
Sit or lie as above with your leg out straight. Tighten your thigh muscles, then straighten your knee and lift the whole leg six inches (15cm) up off the bed or floor. Hold for three seconds then lower gently.



Repeat this exercise ..... times ..... times a day.

## Tensing up the thigh muscles

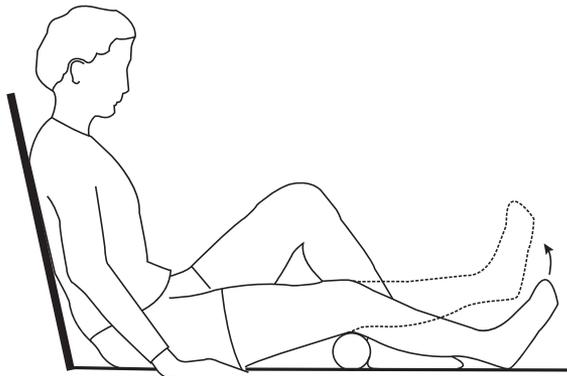
Sit or lie as before with your legs out in front of you. Bend your unoperated leg. Keeping the operated leg straight, tighten the muscles on top of your thigh. Hold for three seconds and then relax.



Repeat this exercise ..... times ..... times a day.

## Heel lifts

Sit or lie as above with a rolled-up towel or a block under your knee. Keeping your knee DOWN on the block, raise your heel. Straighten your knee as much as possible and hold for three seconds.



Repeat this exercise ..... times ..... times a day.

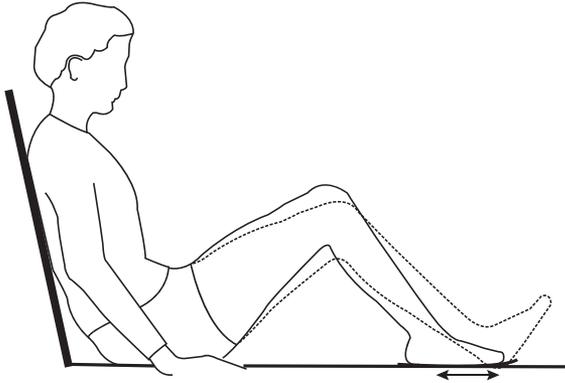
## Ankle movements

Move your feet up and down from the ankle to assist with circulation.

## Bending exercises (flexion)

### Knee bends

Sitting as before you may use a board for this exercise and at home you may use a tray. Keeping your heel down on the board, slide your foot towards you, bending your knee. Hold it at the full bend for three seconds and then release.

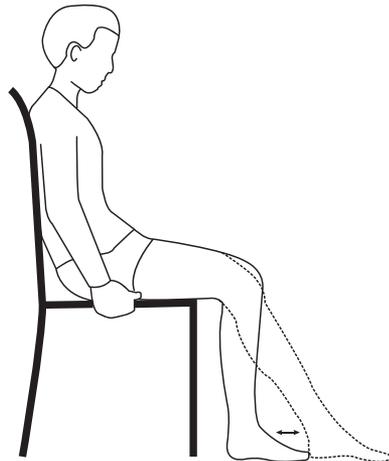


Repeat this exercise ..... times ..... times a day.

### Knee bends in the chair

Sit in a chair with your feet on the ground. Slide your operated foot firmly towards you and then away. Hold for three seconds in the fully bent position.

Repeat this exercise ..... times  
..... times a day.



## Note:

If you continue to have problems with your knee swelling, you can use an ice pack at home. It is easily made by using a bag of frozen peas in a damp tea towel and placing around your knee for 20 minutes. Avoid sitting or standing for long periods. Instead, rest with your leg elevated (raised) above the height of your hip.

## Progress at home

- You must take care of your new joint and therefore avoid heavy work, running and jarring movements.
- If your knee does swell or become more painful, it may be that you have done too much - rest for 24 hours. **If the swelling hasn't gone see your GP straight away.**
- It could take three or more months for all your pain and swelling to settle down.
- Your knee joint may gradually improve for up to a year.
- Kneeling should be avoided.
- Do not drive until you have been told it is safe to do so at your six week follow-up appointment.
- Gradually increase your walking distance, but do not go too far.
- Gradually return to general household activities.

At your first out-patient appointment, you may like to ask if you can:

- take longer walks (and what walking aids you need)
- drive
- return to your leisure activities
- continue the exercises.

## **Outpatient physiotherapy**

You may be referred for outpatient physiotherapy. If so, your appointment will be at:

Hospital: .....

Date: ..... Time: .....

**The advice in this leaflet is a guide only - please check with your doctor and therapists if you have any questions.**

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

