



POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Post Operative ACL Reconstruction Surgery Instructions

After undergoing ACL reconstruction surgery you may have several questions as to what to expect. The following are categories under which the majority of these questions will fall. Please read them carefully as they will address many concerns you may have and provide you with an idea of what you can expect in the next days.

The exercises contained in this guide are designed to help you safely regain strength and mobility. Remember that the reconstructed ligament will slowly regain strength and mobility over several months.

If you develop any fever (101°F or above), unexpected pain, redness, or swelling, please contact the office for instructions.

In most cases, an office visit is scheduled one week after surgery. Dr. Izquierdo would like to see his patients within three days of surgery. Please contact the office for an appointment.

Pain

There will be some pain and numbness in your leg following surgery. This is normal and to be expected. You will be given a prescription for pain relief upon discharge that you should take as needed. You may also note some swelling or puffiness around your knee. This is also to be expected.

Applying ice to your knee will help limit swelling and decrease your pain. The optimum ice time is 20-25 minutes with the ice on and 60 minutes with the ice off. It is important to keep your knee dry, therefore use a towel or elastic bandage between the ice and your knee. The cryo pads must be covered (ace or foam wrap) to prevent condensation. Please do not use any heat on your knee.

For the first week, elevate your knee above your heart to help control the swelling.

Nausea

Some patients will experience nausea/vomiting following surgery. This is usually a reaction to the anesthesia. We recommend that you employ a clear liquid diet and discontinue the pain medication for 4-6 hours. Ice and Tylenol can be used for pain relief during this time. If the nausea persists for 48 hours, please contact the office.

Bathing

You should keep your knee dry until two days after the staples are removed (7-10 days following surgery). Do not bathe, swim, or immerse your knee in a hot tub or whirlpool.

Dressings

You will be sent home from the hospital with a bulky bandage/dressing on. You may change the dressing after 3 days. Cleanse the surgical incisions with an antiseptic and re-dress the incisions with sterile gauze pads. If you have “steri-strips” on the incisions, use care when removing your dressings so that they remain in place. If your bandage gets wet, it is extremely important to change the bandage immediately.

If you were prescribed TED hose (white elastic stocking), please continue to wear them until you are given other instructions. TED stockings are used to help control swelling.

Crutches

You may apply a small amount of weight on your affected leg when comfort permits. You will use crutches for approximately 4 weeks. Your physician may give you other instructions. You cannot drive until you are full weight-bearing (walking without crutches).

CONTINUED ON BACK

Brace

The brace should be worn at all times. Unless your physician specified differently, you will be allowed 0-90 degrees of motion. When at rest, it is important to “lock” your brace in full extension (meaning your knee should be straight). You should not leave your knee bent for an extended period of time. If you have any questions concerning your brace, please contact the office and a certified trainer can assist you.

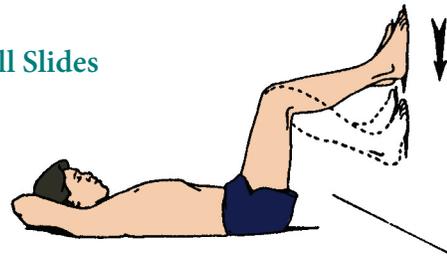
Exercises and Physical Therapy

It is extremely important to start physical therapy immediately following surgery. If you did not receive a physical therapy prescription, please call the office so that they can assist in scheduling your appointments with a physical therapy clinic. There are a few exercises that you can begin at home (your physical therapist will also give you other home exercises).

- **QUADRICEPS SETS:** Straighten your leg as far as you can. Dorsiflex your ankle (pull your ankle and toes up) and “Contract” (make the muscle tight) the thigh muscle as hard as you can. Hold this contraction for 5 seconds, repeat 20 times every hour you are awake.
- **HAMSTRING SETS:** Bend your knee to 45 degrees and place the heel of your foot on the floor or table. Dorsiflex your ankle (pull you ankle and toes up) and push your heel down as hard as you can while simultaneously pulling your foot towards your body. Hold this contraction for 5 seconds, repeat 20 times every hour you are awake. DO NOT perform Hamstring Sets if the ACL graft was taken from your hamstring tendons.
- **ANKLE PUMPS:** Gently flex and extend your ankle. This should be done with your leg elevated, if possible. Repeat 20 times every hour you are awake.
- **HEEL PROPS:** Prop your heel on a towel roll or the arm of the coach allowing your leg to extend/straighten fully. Maintain this position for 5-10 minutes. This should be done several times during the day.

- **KNEE FLEXION:** Flexion (bending the knee) of your knee begins immediately following surgery in a machine called CPM (continuous passive motion). The machine moves your knee for you. You may be sent home with this machine and instructions will be given to you as to the length of time to use it. If you were not sent home with a CPM, you can work on flexion by resting your foot on the wall while lying on your back (see Wall Slides illustration below). Let your knee bend, allowing your foot to slowly slide down the wall until there is tightness. Hold 15-20 seconds, use your other leg to lift your foot back up the wall. Repeat 20 times. NOTE: Flexion exercises in the CPM and wall slides should be performed with your knee brace on until instructed by your physical therapist to do exercises without it.

Wall Slides



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