

POST –OP KNEE EXERCISES

Active exercise involves strengthening the muscles of the knee (quadriceps and hamstrings). Passive exercise involves flexion and extension of the knee with an outside force, i.e. your hand.

The following exercises should be performed twice a day for the first six weeks.

Weight Bearing Precautions. Do not put more than 50% body weight on the on the involved leg. Use crutches or a walker.

A. Passive range of motion exercises (the “chair exercises”)

Flexion. While sitting in a chair with the knee flexed and your foot on the floor the knee more by pushing your thigh forward using your body scooting forward in the chair. You should push until it is uncomfortable, but not painful. Repeat several times/session. You should progress towards a goal of approximately 110 to 120 degrees by six weeks after surgery.

Extension. While sitting in a chair with the leg extended, push on your thigh (above the knee) down towards the floor with both hands to extend the knee until you begin to feel some discomfort. Progress to a goal of full extension (0 degrees) by six weeks.

B. Active muscle strengthening exercises.

Leg lifts. Lying on your back bend your opposite knee to protect your back. Lift the operated leg approximately 12-18” off the bed and hold it for a count of 5. During this count contract all of the muscles in the legs (an isometric contraction), then slowly let the leg down to the bed. Work up to the point where you can do 30 repetitions easily. Once you can do 30 repetitions easily, you may add 1-2lbs of weight at your ankle.

Short Arc Quads. Put a short towel under the knee such that the knee is bent 15to20 degrees. Extend the knee lifting the heel off the bed until the knee is in full extension. Hold for a slow count of 5, and then gradually let the heel down. Repeat this 15 to 30 times as tolerated. Once you can do 30 repetitions easily, add 1- to 2 lbs. Of weight at your ankle.

Hamstring sets. Keep a pillow under your knees as above. Dig your heel into the bed, pulling it towards your buttocks. Tighten the back of the thigh muscles. Hold for a count of 5.

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