



Newcastle  
PRIVATE HOSPITAL



## Total Knee Replacement Booklet

Physiotherapy Department Newcastle Private Hospital

Reviewed September 2021

This leaflet is to be used as a guide only and should not replace advice from your surgeon or physiotherapist

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# Total Knee Replacement

## General Information

To achieve the best outcome from your operation we recommend you exercise regularly. Your Physiotherapist will help you with your exercises until you can manage them yourself. During the first two weeks after knee replacement it is essential to regain normal movement and strength.

You may feel unwell, but it is still important to do what you can 4 times/day.

Using ice and pain relief medication regularly is vital to ensure you are able to exercise effectively. We recommend you apply ice for 20mins particularly after exercise but at least 4 times per day. Ask your nurse or physiotherapist to bring it to you until you are able to walk to the nurse's desk and collect it yourself.

Taking regular pain relief medication is also essential to allow you to exercise effectively.

Please check with your nurse if you are unsure about any of your medications.

## Walking

Walking is an important part of your recovery, "little and often" is the key. Initially your physiotherapist will teach you how to walk safely with a frame and then progress onto a walking stick.

Regaining a normal pattern of walking will become easier each day. The aim is for equal step lengths, not limping and placing the heel down first, then the toes.

When turning use your feet to step around, do not twist your knees.

Your physiotherapist will let you know when it is safe for you to practice your walking alone and guide you with how much and how often.

Please **DO NOT** get up by yourself until you have been told to do so.

When you go home you will need to continue walking regularly. Start on flat ground and progress to hills as your fitness improves.

## Common Tasks

- Dressing:** Sit down to dress or undress. Dress your operated leg first and undress your operated leg last.
- Bathroom:** An over toilet aid may be required if your toilet is too low for transfers. A shower chair, stool, bath board or transfer bench can also be arranged if necessary.
- Bed mobility:** Initially you will need assistance getting into and out of bed until you are strong enough to achieve this yourself. Practice getting in and out of the same side as you would at home.
- Sleeping:** When you are sleeping or resting in bed, do not place a pillow under your knee(s) and keep the leg section of the bed flat. Place a pillow between your knees when lying on your side

## Footwear

It is best to walk in joggers or good walking shoes to help support your feet and reduce the stress on all your joints. Staff will assist you to apply and remove your shoes until you can manage it yourself. A long handled shoe horn is often a worthwhile investment.

## Getting in and out of a car

Move the front passenger seat back as far as possible and recline the back rest before you get in. Use a pillow on the seat if it is too low. Back up to the seat until you feel it with your legs, reach behind with your arms to slowly lower yourself onto the seat. Lean back into the seat and lift each leg into the car.

## Stairs

Before you go home you will be able to negotiate stairs safely.

- When going **up the stairs**, your un-operated leg goes up first then your operated leg, then your stick/crutches;
- When going **down the stairs**, your stick/crutches goes down first then your operated leg, then your un-operated leg.

**'Up with the good, down with the bad'**

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## **Discharge Information**

### **Medications**

It is normal to still require regular pain relief when you leave hospital.

Continue taking your medications as prescribed by your Doctor.

Check with your Doctor or nurse if you are unsure.

### **Exercise**

To make a full recovery it is important to continue your exercises, as prescribed by your physiotherapist, twice daily for at least three months.

If you have access to an exercise bike, slowly build the time you can cycle forward and reverse.

Gradually increase your walking distance or time and include gentle slopes once you regain your normal fitness level.

Hydrotherapy (pool-based exercises supervised by a physiotherapist) may also be an option. Ask your surgeon or physiotherapist if hydrotherapy is an option for you.

### **Other Activities**

Ask your surgeon about returning to sport, swimming or other activities. You may like to use ice after resuming your normal activities.

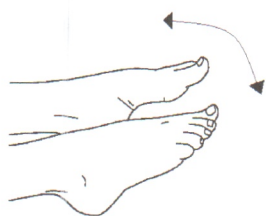
### **Driving**

The RTA recommends you wait 6 weeks after surgery before driving, unless your Doctor instructs you otherwise. Some insurance companies put restrictions on how long you have to wait before driving so please check with your insurer.

### **Contact Your GP/ Surgeon/Hospital if:**

- Your knee pain increases or you develop pain/swelling in your calf or thigh
- You have trouble breathing or experience chest pain
- Your wound is unusually red, hot or weeping
- You develop a fever (increased temperature)

## Exercise Program



Sitting or lying, pull feet back towards you then point toes down repeatedly.

Repeat 10 times. Do every hour you are awake while you are still in bed and less active to help your circulation.



Keep your knee on a roll, lift your foot until your knee is straight, hold for 3 seconds, then slowly lower it down.

Repeat 10 times.

Do 4 times per day.



Slide your heel towards your buttocks, bending your operated leg as much as you can, then straighten your knee back down. Repeat 10 times.

Do 4 times per day



Lift your operated leg off the bed, keeping your knee straight then slowly lower it back down. Bending your un-operated leg will place less stress on your back.

Repeat 10 times.

Do 4 times per day.



Straighten your operated leg by pushing down onto a roll placed under your ankle. Hold for 5 seconds then relax.

Repeat 10 times.

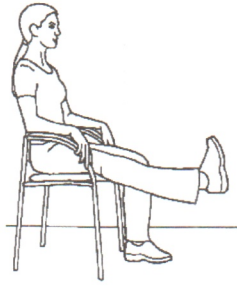
Do 4 times per day.



In sitting, bend your operated knee by sliding your foot back as far as you can. Then slide your bottom forward to further stretch your knee. Hold for 5 seconds.

Repeat 10 times.

Do 4 times per day.



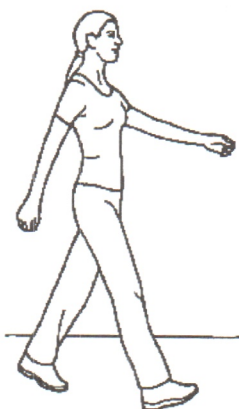
In sitting, straighten your operated knee, hold for 5 seconds then lower back down. Repeat 10 times.  
Do 4 times per day.



Hold onto the end of your bed or a rail in the corridor with your feet hip width apart. Slowly bend your knees as if you were going to sit on a high stool and then straighten back up. Repeat 10 times.  
Do 4 times per day.



Hold onto a rail or the end of your bed with your feet hip width apart. Slowly bend your operated knee by lifting your heel towards your buttocks, then lower it back down. Repeat 10 times.  
Do 4 times per day.



Once you have been told to walk by yourself, walk in the corridor 4 times per day.

Aim to have equal step lengths and place your heel down first then your toes.

Time your walks before going home to get a baseline for your home program. Aim to increase the time of each walk gradually.

Stick to flat surfaces initially and once you are able to walk 20-30mins on the flat you can add in gentle hills.