



# Knee Arthroscopy

Information for patients  
from the Physiotherapy Department





## **INFORMATION**

This booklet will provide you with useful advice and general guidance to help in the recovery process after your knee arthroscopy surgery.

### **WHAT IS THIS OPERATION FOR?**

A knee arthroscopy is commonly performed if you suffer from knee pain, swelling or an unstable knee. An x-ray or scan may have been used to confirm the source of your knee problem, however an arthroscopy may be needed to have a better look inside your knee joint. An arthroscopy can also be used to treat the cause of your knee problem by trimming or repairing any of the damaged areas. This procedure aims to reduce your knee pain and improve your function, so that you can return to normal activities.

## WHAT CAN I EXPECT AFTER SURGERY?

Once the surgery is finished the small incisions will be closed with steri-strips or stitches and covered with a small dressing. A large wool and crepe bandage will then be wrapped around the knee this dressing can be removed 48 hours after the operation. The nursing staff will advise you regarding your wound care.

**Discomfort:** Following your operation you may find that your knee is painful. As a local anaesthetic has been put into your knee, you may only start to feel pain the evening you leave hospital or the following morning. To help reduce any discomfort you will be prescribed painkillers and it is important that you take these regularly, as prescribed by the doctor looking after you.

**Rest:** It is important to keep as active as possible to reduce the risk of blood clots, but you also need to rest. We advise that you rest the operated leg on a stool or something similar for 20 minutes every two to three hours initially. This will help with any discomfort and control swelling.

**Ice:** In addition you may also use an ice pack on your knee to help with swelling and pain. The ice pack can be applied for 20 minutes every two to three hours. Ensure the ice pack is wrapped in something like a tea towel so that the ice pack is not in direct contact with the skin (a bag of frozen vegetables works well if you do not have an ice pack).

## PHYSIOTHERAPY EXERCISES

Following your operation you should begin to do the following exercises as soon as possible. It may not be necessary for you to see the physiotherapist. Please complete the exercises three times a day, until your knee feels strong and is moving easily.

### Exercise 1: Ankle pumps

When lying or sitting, bend and straighten your ankles briskly. Repeat this 10 times, (every hour for the first day).



## Exercise 2: Static quads

Lie or sit with your legs straight out in front of you. Pull your toes towards you and push your knees down firmly against the bed. Repeat this 10 times.



## Exercise 3: Straight leg raise

Lie or sit with your legs straight out in front of you. Pull your toes towards you, keep the knee straight and slowly lift the leg off the bed. Hold for three seconds then slowly lower the leg back down to the starting position. Repeat up to three sets of 10 reps.



### Exercise 4: Knee Flexion

Sit on a chair with your feet on the floor. Gently bend your knee as far as comfortable by sliding it back along the floor. Repeat this 10 times.



### Exercise 5: Knee extension

Sit on a chair with your feet on the floor. Pull your toes up towards you, tighten your thigh muscle and straighten your knee. Hold for three seconds then slowly lower your leg back down to the floor. Repeat up to three sets of 10 times.



## Exercise 6: Wall slides

Stand leaning with your back against a wall with your feet about 20cm from the wall hip width apart. Slowly slide down the wall until your hips and knees are at right angles. Hold for three seconds then slowly return to starting position. Repeat this 10 times.



## Walking

It is important that you can walk safely and comfortably following your knee arthroscopy. Not every patient will need a walking aid however if you feel unsteady then you will be shown how to use elbow crutches. This allows you to put less weight through the joint and assists your balance. As your pain and mobility improves then you can gradually discard your walking aid unless otherwise instructed.



## Stairs

To go up a step or stairs:

Step up with the 'good' leg

Then bring the operated leg onto the same step

Lastly bring your crutch(es) onto the same step,  
(if you have been issued one)

To go down a step or stairs:

Put your crutch(es) onto the step below, (if you have been issued one)

Then put your operated leg down onto the same step.

Lastly bring your 'good' leg onto the same step



## Driving

It is important that you do not drive for at least 48 hours following your surgery. After this time it is then your decision when you feel able to resume driving. You must be comfortable and able to act appropriately in an emergency situation i.e. perform an emergency stop safely. You should check your insurance policy too as you may need to inform your insurance company of your operation.

## Work

Most people are able to return to work within two weeks of surgery. If you have a more manual job which includes lifting, bending, kneeling or carrying then you may need some extra time off. Please consult your GP if this is the case.

## Return to activities

Only return to your usual activities when you feel ready and comfortable. You may have some discomfort and swelling in the joint and surrounding muscles, this is to be expected. You should continue to take your painkillers and use ice for as long as you need to following activity.

## Sports/Hobbies

Most people should be able to return to their sports and hobbies following their knee arthroscopy. Start exercising when you feel able to and gradually increase the amount that you are doing. Increased pain and swelling are signs that you may be doing too much too soon, so reduce your activity levels and build it up again gradually once the symptoms have settled.

**Please note, all of the information provided in this booklet is for guidance only.**



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