

**POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS:
ACL RECONSTRUCTION**

ACTIVITY

- **You may put your weight on your leg as tolerated while walking with the brace locked straight.** You must use crutches to assist with walking.
- **Please keep your brace locked for the first 48 hours.** After this, you may start bending your knee gradually up to 90 degrees with the brace unlocked 0-90 for short periods of time. You will need to lock the brace straight when walking.
- Do not engage in prolonged periods of standing or walking during the first 7-10 days after surgery.
- Avoid long periods of sitting (without leg elevated) or long distance traveling for 2 weeks.
- Avoid propping up a pillow under your knee for comfort, rather, prop up your heel to allow gravity to fully extend your knee like the picture shows below.

BRACE

- **When walking or up and moving around, the knee brace must be on and locked straight at 0 degrees.**
- When sleeping you must wear the brace for the first week, if necessary, you may open it to 90 degrees of flexion for comfort.
- If you are sitting/lying down while awake/relaxing (reading a book, watching TV, etc) you may loosen the Velcro straps and remove the brace.



DRESSINGS & INCISIONS

- The first two days after surgery you can expect a small amount of red-tinged drainage on your dressings. This is normal.
- Please keep the dressing clean and dry; if you are going to shower/bathe, you must protect the dressing. You may not soak in a pool, lake, hot tub, or the ocean until a week after the sutures have been removed.
- You may remove the dressing 4 days after surgery (white cotton wrap, white gauze pads, yellow gauze tape).
- You may apply Band Aids® to the incisions if you would like or leave them open to air.
- Please do not use Bacitracin® or other ointments on the incisions.

PAIN & INFLAMMATION

- **Ice-** Apply ice wrapped in a towel several times per day for 20 minutes for the first week and then as needed for pain relief and inflammation.
- **Compression-** Use the ace wrap to decrease swelling. Wrap from the foot towards your thigh. If provided, you should wear the white stocking for at least 5-7 days after surgery to decrease swelling and prevent blood clots.
- **Elevation-** Keep your foot **elevated above your heart** as much as possible for the first 3 to 4 days. Keep your leg elevated with a pillow under your calf or foot, **NOT under the knee.**
- **Pain medication-**
 - You have been given a narcotic prescription for pain control; please take as directed.
 - If you think you will require a refill on your medication, you **MUST** do so during our regular **weekday** office hours.

- If you need additional pain medication you may take Tylenol 500 - 650 mg every 6 hours. Do not take more than 3000mg in a 24-hour period!
- Common side effects of the pain medication are:
 - NAUSEA: To decrease nausea, take these medications with food.
 - DROWSINESS: Do not drive a car or operate machinery.
 - ITCHING: You may take Benadryl to alleviate any itching.
 - CONSTIPATION: To decrease constipation, use stool over-the-counter softeners remedies (Mineral Oil, Milk of Magnesia, etc). Also avoid bananas, rice, apples, toast, or yogurt...as these foods can make you constipated. Getting up and moving around also helps with constipation and “waking up” your intestinal tract.
- Anti-inflammatory medications (Aleve, Ibuprofen, Naproxen, etc.) should **not** be taken after surgery until cleared by Dr. Gilmer.

EMERGENCIES

- You must have someone stay with you for the first 48 hours after surgery
- Please call the clinic if:
 - Drainage soaks the dressings, expands, is foul-smelling, or your incisions are red, warm, and extremely painful
 - You develop a fever ($>101.5^{\circ}$) or chills
 - You experience leg or calf pain, leg swelling, or difficulty breathing

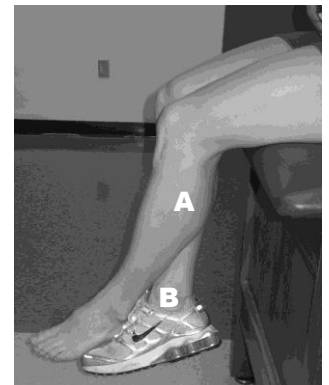
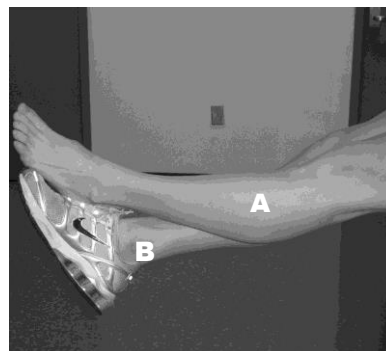
FOLLOW-UP CARE

- Please **schedule a follow-up visit** for suture removal and to review your surgery 10-14 days postoperatively if not already scheduled.
- You should be scheduled to see your physical therapist in approximately 3-5 days after surgery.

EXERCISES – When you are comfortable and ready you may perform each exercise 2-3 times a day; it may help to take pain medication 20-30 minutes prior to the exercises and to apply ice after the exercises

Flexion:

1. Sit in a chair and remove or unlock your brace
2. Place your unoperated leg (B) under the foot of your operated leg (A)
3. Gently allow the knee to bend by doing ALL work with the unoperated leg (B)
4. When you reach your maximum bend, hold for 5 seconds
5. Use the unoperated leg (B) to straighten the knee
DO NOT ATTEMPT TO STRAIGHTEN YOUR LEG USING YOUR THIGH MUSCLES!
6. Perform 10-20 times in a row
7. **Goal = 90° of flexion** (bending) by 2 weeks after surgery

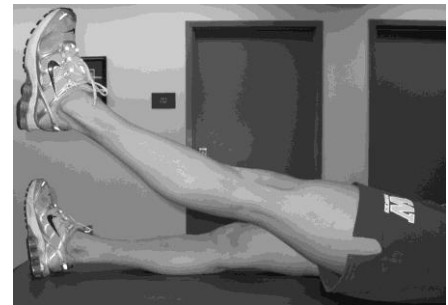
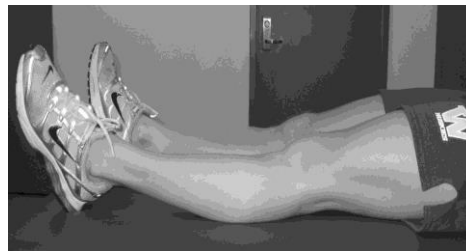


Quadriceps Contractions:

1. Sit or lie on the floor with your operated leg straight
 2. Place a towel roll under the knee
 3. Tighten your thigh and hamstring muscles, causing you to press your knee downward into the towel roll
 4. Hold this position for 10 seconds
 5. Relax your thigh and hamstring muscles
- Perform 2-3 sets of 10

Straight Leg Raises:

1. Lie on the floor with your **brace on and locked**
 2. Perform a quadriceps contraction (as stated in the above exercise)
 3. Raise your foot about 6-12" off the floor
 4. Slowly lower your leg back to the floor
 5. Relax your thigh muscle
- Perform 2-3 sets of 10



Ankle Pumps:

1. Point toes downward and hold for 5 seconds
 2. Point toes upward and hold for 5 seconds
- Perform 2-3 sets of 10

