

Physiotherapy - Orthopaedics

Knee Arthroscopy (Physiotherapy following surgery)



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What is an Arthroscopy?

An arthroscopy is the examination of a joint using an arthroscope (a thin, flexible viewing instrument) inserted through two or three very small cuts. This allows a diagnosis to be made and any necessary treatment to be carried out.

What to expect afterwards

You will have a bandage covering your knee, which can be removed after 24 hours. You will have a stitch or strip keeping the wound edges together, keep these covered and dry to allow them to heal, this usually takes 3-5



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days. If you have stitches in your knee, make an appointment with your practice nurse to have them removed.

You will need to rest until the effects of the anaesthetic have worn off. It may take several hours before the feeling comes back into the treated knee.

It is normal for your knee to ache and be slightly swollen after the arthroscopy. For this reason, you will be given painkillers, which you should take regularly, as advised. Keeping your leg raised, applying ice packs can also help reduce the pain and swelling. To apply an ice pack, wrap a bag of crushed ice or a packet of frozen peas in a tea towel and place over the area for 15 -20 minutes. This can be done regularly throughout the day.

Exercises

The success of your operation will often depend on the amount of effort you are prepared to put into your recovery.

The exercises might be quite hard at the start and you may feel a little sore, but it is vital that you maintain the range of movement in your knee and the strength in your leg muscles, especially the quadriceps.

Before your arthroscopy you should be seen by a physiotherapist who will teach you these exercises and give you some general advice.

You should complete your exercises 5 times a day.

Foot and ankle exercises

Complete these hourly

Move your ankles up and down fairly quickly for 10 seconds. Then complete circles one way for 10 seconds and circles the other way for 10 seconds.



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Static gluts

Repeat 5 times

Squeeze your buttocks together and hold for 10 seconds.

Try to make sure the thighs stay relaxed and only your bottom muscles are working.



Static quadriceps

Repeat 5 times

- Lie on your back with your knee straight. Pull your toes up towards you, push your heel away and tighten the muscles in your thigh. Hold for 10 seconds.

During this exercise, you should feel your patella (kneecap) move upwards towards your hip. Due to the location of your surgery, this may feel uncomfortable but it is important to remember you will not be doing your knee any harm.



Inner range quadriceps

Repeat 5 times



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Straight leg raise

Repeat 5 times

- Lie on the bed with your knee straight. Pull your toes up towards you, push your heel away and tighten the muscles in your thigh. Then try to lift your whole leg up like a rod off the bed by about 20cm. Hold for 5 seconds and slowly return to the start position.



Knee Flexion (bending)

Repeat 10 times



Lie on your back, with a thin plastic bag under your foot and slide your foot upwards, drawing your heel as close to your bottom as possible.

If this exercise is too painful you can:

- Use your hands to hold your thigh to help
- Assist the movement by pulling on a strap positioned beneath your foot or at the bottom of your shin
- You can lie on your side with your operated leg supported on the bed and slide your knee up and down to bend it

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Daily Activities

Walking: You may be advised to use crutches by the therapy team. You should try and walk as normally as possible and slowly build up the distance you walk.

Stairs: When walking upstairs put your **non-operated** leg up first. When walking downstairs put your **operated** leg down first.

Physiotherapy: An outpatient physiotherapy appointment will be arranged if your knee condition requires an individual treatment programme.

Work: You may return to work when your knee feels comfortable and it will withstand the stresses of your job. The average time needed off work is usually 2 weeks.

Driving: It may be possible to drive after 7 days but check with your insurance company. In order to drive, you must make sure you can bend and straighten your knee well and that you can perform an emergency stop.

Sport: It is not advised to return to competitive sports until you can hop, squat, sprint, make direction changes and sudden stop starts, without experiencing pain.

If you have any queries or concerns please contact:

University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire Telephone: 024 7696 5046

Rugby Physiotherapy Orthopaedic Department Telephone: 01788 663054

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