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## Video: Knee replacement recovery exercises

There are different types of [knee replacement](#) surgery depending on the injury, the severity of the injury and the surgeon performing the procedure. This leaflet is to be used only as a guideline once you have discussed and confirmed with your surgeon and medical team that the exercises below are appropriate for you following your surgery.

The following exercises are recommended to help reduce swelling and pain, increase range of movement, strengthen the muscles around the knee joint and prevent future problems.

### Range of movement exercises

**Please remember that these exercises can only be completed once cleared with your surgeon and medical team**

#### Knee flexion/extension sitting on the floor

1. Sitting with your legs straight out in front of you, support your back if necessary.
2. Place a plastic bag under the heel and slide it towards your bottom, using your hands **or a band around the foot** for support if necessary.
3. Slowly and controlled, straighten leg back out to the starting position.
4. Repeat 10 times on each affected knee, twice daily.

#### Knee flexion/extension sitting

An alternative to the previous exercise, should you struggle getting on and off the floor.

1. Sit upright in your chair with both feet planted on the floor.
2. Start by straightening the operated knee out as far as possible and in a slow controlled movement bend it back down and as far under the chair as possible.
3. You can use the non-operative leg to aid this further by hooking the ankles and assisting the foot further under the chair.
4. Repeat this movement 10 times on each affected leg, twice daily.

## Stretches for the muscles of the knee joint

**Please remember that these exercises can only be completed once cleared with your surgeon and medical team**

### Quad stretch

1. Stand with your hands supported on the back of a chair.
2. Bend one knee and bring your foot towards your bottom.
3. Hook your hand around your ankle and pull the ankle closer towards the bottom to feel a stretch in the thigh muscle at the front of the leg.
4. Be sure to keep the knees touching.
5. Hold the stretch for 20 seconds; repeat three times on each side, twice daily.
6. To simplify, either hold on to your trouser legs or place a towel or band around the ankle. This can also be completed lying on your side with the operated leg up.

### Hamstring stretch

1. Sit upright in a chair with both knees bent.
2. Bring your bottom towards the front of the chair.
3. Straighten the operated leg as much as possible and flex your foot - toes to the sky.
4. Take your body weight forward.

# Strengthening for the knee muscles

Please remember that these exercises can only be completed once cleared with your surgeon and medical team

## Isometric quads

1. This a simple but very effective exercise for people with very weak quads (particularly after surgery).
2. Sitting on the floor, support your back and position your legs straight in front of you.
3. Start by pushing one knee down into the ground, feeling the quad (thigh) muscle activate.
4. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat 10 times on each leg, twice daily.

## Inner range quads

1. Start sitting on the floor; support your back and position your legs straight in front of you.
2. Place a rolled-up hand towel underneath one knee.
3. Point your foot to the ceiling before pushing your knee down into the towel. You should feel your heel lift off the floor.
4. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat 10 times on each leg, twice daily.

## Straight leg raise

1. A progression from the exercises above.
2. Sitting on the floor, support your back and position your legs straight in front of you.
3. Turn your foot outwards; push your knee down into the floor before lifting your leg off the ground 4-6 inches.
4. Hold for five seconds and repeat 10 times on each leg, twice daily.

## Sit to stand

1. Start sitting on a chair.
2. Without using your hands for support, stand up from the chair and then sit back down again in a slow and controlled movement.
3. Complete this exercise 20 times.
4. As you improve, increase the number of repetitions gradually up to 50; you can also try this exercise from a lower chair.

### **Wall squat**

1. Stand with your back to the wall.
2. Place your feet shoulder distance apart and away from the wall.
3. Slowly slide your hands down the wall as you lower your body into a squat position.
4. Do not allow the knees to buckle in, by keeping the knees directly over the middle toes.
5. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat 10 times, twice daily.
6. If you do not have access to a wall, you can complete a standing squat, ensuring your knees stay in line with your middle toes, your weight is distributed back through your heels and your chest remains proud and open. If you get an increase in knee pain, you should stop and seek professional advice.

### **Adductor (inner thigh muscle)**

1. Sitting on a chair with your back supported.
2. Place a small soft ball or pillow in between the knees.
3. Engage your stomach muscles; squeeze the ball in between your inner thighs.
4. Hold for 10 seconds; repeat 10 times, twice daily.

### **Static glutes**

1. Sitting on a chair with your back supported.

2. Clench your bottom muscles together and hold for 10 seconds; repeat 10 times, twice daily.

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<b>Last updated by:</b> Lilly Sabri 15/12/2017	
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