

Knee Replacement Recovery: After Exercises

In the days and weeks following knee replacement surgery, physical activity is an important part of recovery. Begin to do your post-operative exercises in the hospital and continue to do them after you return home. You may have practiced many of these post-operative exercises before your surgery as part of your preparation. Now after your surgery, these exercises help you regain motion in your knee, strengthen the muscles around the new joint and help you perform many normal daily activities. These exercises may include ankle pumps, quad sets, gluteal sets, heel-slides, short arc quads, straight leg raises, long arc quads, seated knee flexion, and arm-chair push-ups.

In the hospital, you will work with a physical therapist to ensure you are doing these exercises correctly. If you are doing an exercise incorrectly or too much, you run the risk of damaging your knee and complicating your recovery. And when you are at home, continue to work with a physical therapist to stay on track. Your physical therapist may come to your home to help you, or you may attend outpatient physical therapy at a rehabilitation center. With the help of your physical therapist, you will set exercise goals to continue to build the strength in your knee.

Do your exercises as prescribed, usually about 20 minutes, two times a day. Make them a part of your daily routine so you do not miss a session. As you get stronger, you and your physical therapist will set new goals to work towards. This may mean some exercises will change as your recovery progresses.

Exercising after having surgery can be painful, but you need to exercise in order to help build the strength in your knee and regain your balance. Take your pain medication when needed about an hour prior to your therapy session. Talk to your healthcare provider if you think you have more pain than you should while exercising. You may need to increase the amount of pain medication you take or change your medication.

Continue to do your post-operative exercise routine as directed until your follow-up appointment. But remember - exercise is a healthy part of daily living and you should continue to do some form of exercise even after your recovery is complete. With your new knee, you can now do many of the activities you used to do - and enjoy them.