

## ACL DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

Raj Bazaz, MD

(303) 321-1333 or

Toll free 1-888-900-1333 (outside Denver)

[www.western-ortho.com](http://www.western-ortho.com)

1. **Dressing Change:** You can change your surgical dressing 72 hours after surgery. After removing the brace. Please discard the entire white padded dressing, leaving the steri-strips in place on the skin. Clean gauze should be placed over the incision sites. This will help keep the wound clean and dry. Put the brace back on. You will need to tighten up the Velcro on the brace.
2. **Showering:** For the first 14 days after surgery it is necessary to protect the incision site from getting wet. You may shower 3 days after surgery as long as the knee is kept dry by wrapping with plastic wrap or a garbage bag. After 2 weeks, you may get the knee wet in the shower, patting the steri-strips dry. You must wait 3 weeks after surgery before submerging the leg in a bath, pool, or Jacuzzi, as long as the incisions are completely closed.
3. **Icing:** Generally, this is most beneficial when used continuously during the first week for comfort, and then as needed. Ice packs can be applied for 20 minutes at a time, as often as every hour, if desired. The main benefit from cold therapy is increased comfort and decreased swelling.
4. **Pain Medications:** Generally, you will be prescribed 2 different medications for use at home after surgery. They are:
  - 1) **Narcotic pain reliever:**

Do not take on an empty stomach and do not drink alcohol while using the prescription pain medication. If you should experience any untoward side effects, please stop the medication and contact our office. If a refill is needed, please contact our office during business hours.
  - 2) **Keflex (Cephalexin):**

An antibiotic; Take first tablet about 4 hours after leaving the surgery facility, then 1 tablet every 8 hours until finished. 3 tablets are prescribed to prevent infection, take until they are gone.
5. **Brace/Crutches:** The brace is for your protection while healing and muscle strengthening occur. The brace is kept locked in extension but is unlocked to work on range of motion exercises. It should always be worn when walking and putting weight on your operative leg. Please use when sleeping to encourage knee extension. The crutches can be discontinued as soon as this is comfortable, usually between about 5-7 days after surgery (you will be instructed if longer use is needed). Weaning out of the brace will happen over the first few weeks and depends on your progress with physical therapy.
6. **Activity:** Following your knee surgery, you may want to limit your activities for the first 5 to 7 days (i.e.: not returning to work or school). You may walk as comfort allows with the

assistance of crutches and continued use of the knee brace (you will be informed if you need to limit weight-bearing or range of motion).

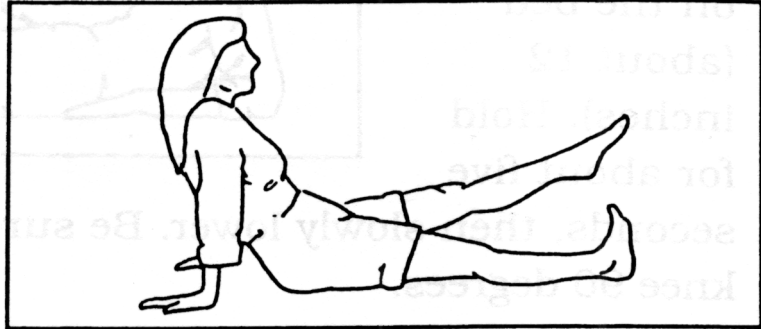
7. **Signs of Infection:** With any surgery it is important to be aware of signs of infection which can include: unusual looking drainage, increased redness and tenderness around the incision sites, fever (101 degrees or above) and chills, or a sudden decrease in flexibility. It is a good idea to check the wounds daily after the initial dressing change. Also, be aware of excessive bleeding, numbness and/or tingling of the feet and/or toes. Please make your doctor aware as soon as possible should you develop any of these possible signs.
8. **First Postoperative visit:** A postoperative appointment should be scheduled to see the doctor 6-10 days after your surgery. Please contact our office to schedule at (303) 321-1333. At this time physical therapy will be discussed. Outpatient physical therapy generally begins 1 week after your surgery, and may continue for 2 to 4 months depending on your progress.
9. **D.V.T. Prophylaxis:** Blood clots after ACL reconstruction can happen but are relatively uncommon. TED stockings has been placed on the non-operative leg. You will be given a stocking to be placed on the operative leg once you have performed your dressing change at 72 hours. These stockings should be worn for 10 days post-operatively. Please take one (enteric coated aspirin) ECASA (325 mg) daily for 10 days post surgery. If you experience any signs or symptoms of D.V.T. such as leg swelling/pain, please notify us immediately. Any chest pain or shortness of breath is an emergency and please call 911. If you have a history of blood clots or other risk factors for DVT we may use injections instead of ECASA to prevent DVT.
10. **Questions:** If you have further question, please contact our office at (303) 321-1333.

# STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

The following exercises can be done on a bed or couch, even before you are able to put weight on your leg.

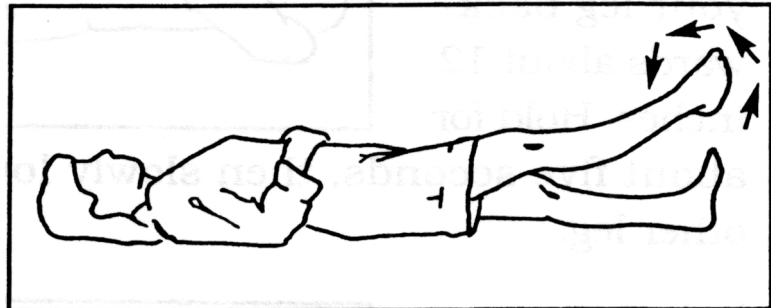
## Toe Point and Flex

- Point and flex your toes 20 times. Do this three times a day.



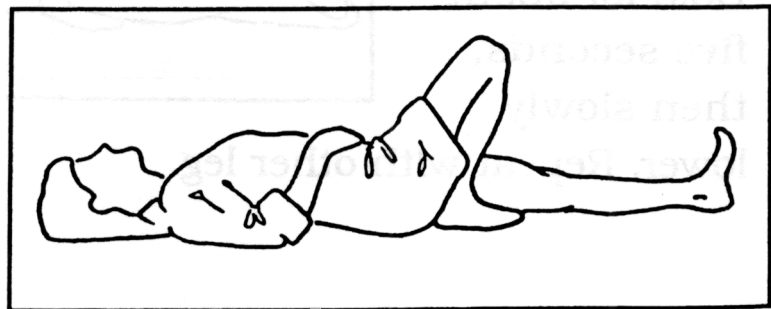
## Ankle Rotation

- Several times a day, rotate your ankles in a large circle about 10 times in each direction.



## Leg Slide

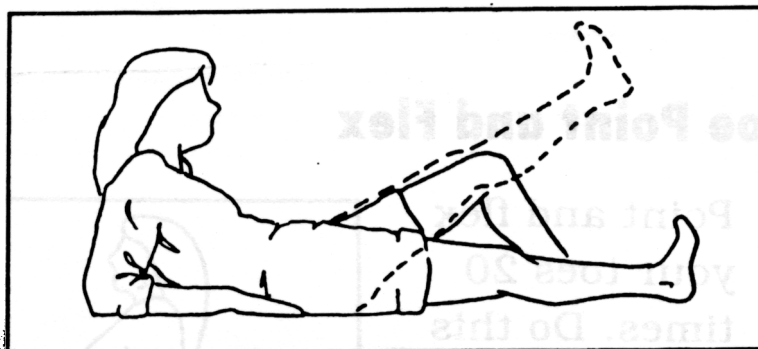
- Lying on your back, slowly slide the heel of your injured leg towards your buttocks. Hold for five seconds. Repeat 10 to 15 times.



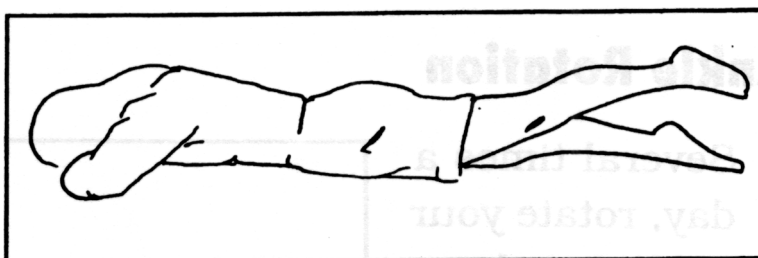
## Straight Leg Raising

Most importantly, do the straight leg raising exercises. Do each three or four times a day. Start doing them twice on each leg. Gradually increase the number of times done.

- Lying on your back, lift your leg straight up off the bed (about 12 inches). Hold for about five seconds, then slowly lower. Be sure to bend the other knee 90 degrees.



- Lying on your stomach, raise your leg backwards about 12 inches. Hold for about five seconds, then slowly lower. Repeat with other leg.



- Lying on your side, raise your leg to the side. Hold for about five seconds, then slowly lower. Repeat with other leg.

