

Things to think about with regards to your home and recovery following Total Knee Surgery:

1. Keep hallways and pathways clear of clutter and other tripping hazards (cords, clutter, etc)
2. Remove throw rugs or tape down edges to prevent catching on the walker legs.
3. Make sure you have a well-lit path from bed to bathroom as you will have to get up and go to the bathroom in the middle of the night more than normal (this is how the body gets rid of swelling). You will be on narcotic pain medication, so you may feel a little off balance when you first get up, give yourself plenty of time to get to the bathroom safely as you will move slower than normal.
4. Make sure your linens are clean particularly prior to getting the bandage off and staples out at your post-op appointment with the surgeon. Doing so will decrease the risk of infection.
5. Perform home exercises 2-3 times per day after your surgery. Take your pain medication 30-45 minutes prior to performing your exercises.
6. Your new knee is no more susceptible to injury than any other part of your body, so although you will feel pain, **YOU ARE NOT DOING DAMAGE** by pushing yourself during your exercises. The sooner you get full range of motion, the happier you will be with your new knee in the long run.
7. Do **NOT** rest with a pillow under the knee or with the knee in a slightly bent position as the scar tissue will glue you there and your muscles/tendons will learn to stay tight making you walk with a limp.
8. Sleeping: Your knee will be most comfortable with you on your back rather than laying on your side. Elevating the leg on a pillow or two is a good idea for swelling control, but you will not be able to stay that way all night. If you'd like to sleep on your side, put a pillow between your knees for comfort. Your knee will wake you up. It's asking to move, so do a few of your exercises and/or get up and go for a short walk around your house then try to go back to sleep. You will have better luck going back to sleep doing this than tossing and turning trying to get comfortable.
9. Elevate your leg with the ankle above the knee and the knee above the hip to create a downward slope to help reduce swelling.
10. Stairs: Go upstairs leading with the non-surgical side first. Go downstairs with the surgical side stepping down first. Use hand railings, a cane, another person for support and assistance.
11. Physical Therapy: Expect to be in physical therapy 2 times per week for 6-8 weeks. Depending on where you go for therapy, session time and frequency may vary, but plan for about 1 hour. It would be wise to take your pain medication 30-45 minutes prior to your PT appointment.
12. Ice: The ice sandwich: put an ice pack on the front (over the incision) and back of the knee (most of the blood supply to the knee is in the back). Keep ice on for 20-30 minutes then remove it and allow the knee to return to normal body temperature before reapplying. You should be icing at least 3-4 times per day for the first few weeks, as often as hourly as needed due to pain and swelling.
13. Showering: immediately after surgery, you will have a waterproof dressing over the incision. Make sure it is intact and isn't peeling up around the edges prior to taking a shower.
14. Bruising and swelling are normal after surgery, we need to keep them under control with ice and elevation. It is normal to have bruising up high on the inner part of the thigh/groin area from the tourniquet used during the procedure.

Basic Total Knee Exercises



Knee extension prop stretch

Sit/lay with leg propped using a rolled up towel, a bolster, books, etc. Try and relax to let the leg stretch into a straight direction letting gravity win. If you cannot tolerate 5 minutes consecutively break it up into multiple shorter bouts.

Hold for 5 minutes
 Repeat 2 times
 Perform 2-3 times per day



Knee flexion scoot stretch

While in a seated position pull your foot back to bend the knee as far as you can. Keep your foot nailed to the floor and scoot your bottom forward to increase the stretch in the knee.

Hold for 15 seconds
 Repeat 10 times
 Perform 2-3 times per day



Quad set

Sit with leg out straight in front of you. Place a small towel under the knee to fill in the gap. Tighten the muscles in the thigh to press down into the towel. Hold for 5 seconds and then relax, you should see your dressing bunching up when contracting.

Hold for 5 seconds
 Repeat 20 times
 Perform 2-3 times per day



Mini squat

Stand using the walker or the counter top for support. Bend just as far as comfortable, focus on the pushing back up to the straight position. Focus on pulling the knee back into the straight position while standing tall.

Hold for 3 seconds in straight position
 Repeat 10 times
 Perform 2-3 times per day