

Physiotherapy Department

Helping your knee to recover after a ligament sprain or rupture

Information for patients



This leaflet gives you advice and exercises to help your knee to recover after your injury. Ligaments can be partially or completely torn due to sudden stretching, which can occur if you fall or twist awkwardly on your knee.

After a ligament sprain or rupture it is very important that you use your knee as normally as possible. At first your knee will feel stiff and painful, but it is important that you continue to move it as this will aid your recovery. The ligaments within and around your knee joint need to be kept moving, so that they don't heal in tightened positions.

You may be given a brace, depending on the extent of your injury. You will be given instructions on how to use this.

Walking

Walking will not damage your knee any further. Always try to walk normally, by putting your heel down first.

In the early stages after your injury, spending a long time on your knee may cause increased pain and swelling. You may be given crutches for a short time to help with this.

Gradually increase your activity as the pain and swelling subside.

Do not return to sport until you are fully fit or when advised by your physiotherapist.

Swelling and pain

Your knee will probably swell up after the injury. When this happens, keep your knee raised as much as possible to keep the swelling to a minimum. One way of doing this is by keeping your leg raised – for example on a footstool or on pillows. Your knee should be higher than your hip.

Pain and swelling can be eased by applying ice for approximately 15 minutes, 3-4 times a day. Wrap the ice in a damp towel to protect your skin.

An elastic bandage (Tubigrip) will help to control swelling and can make your knee feel more supported. These are available from most chemists, or you may have been given one at the hospital.

Basic painkillers will also help. Speak to your GP or Pharmacist if you need further advice about pain relief.

Exercise

It is important that you start to exercise your knee as soon as possible, unless advised otherwise. By exercising and regaining normal movements, the feeling of stiffness and pain will gradually settle.

The exercises will be most effective if practiced regularly. We suggest doing them 3-4 times a day. It is better to repeat the exercises a few times every hour, rather than once a day for a longer period.

The exercises:

1. Static quads

Sit on the floor with your legs straight out in front of you. Push the back of your knee down into the floor using your thigh muscles. Keep your toes pulled up towards your head. Hold for 5 seconds then relax.

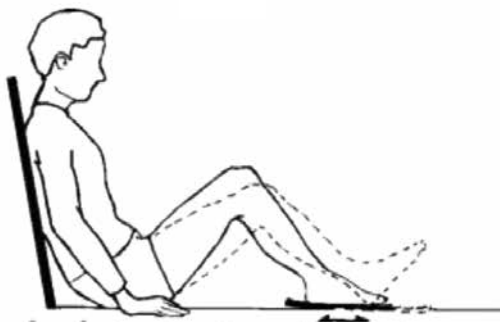
Repeat ___ times.



2. Knee range of movement

Practice bending and straightening your knee as far as is comfortable.

Repeat ___ times.



Further information

You may find the information on 'Sprains and Strains' on the NHS Choices website helpful:

www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Sprains/Pages/Introduction.aspx

Useful telephone numbers

Fracture Clinic (John Radcliffe)

Tel: 01865 740 315

Physiotherapy (John Radcliffe)

Tel: 01865 221 540

Physiotherapy (Horton)

Tel: 01295 229 432

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALS@ouh.nhs.uk**

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November 2016
Review: November 2019
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