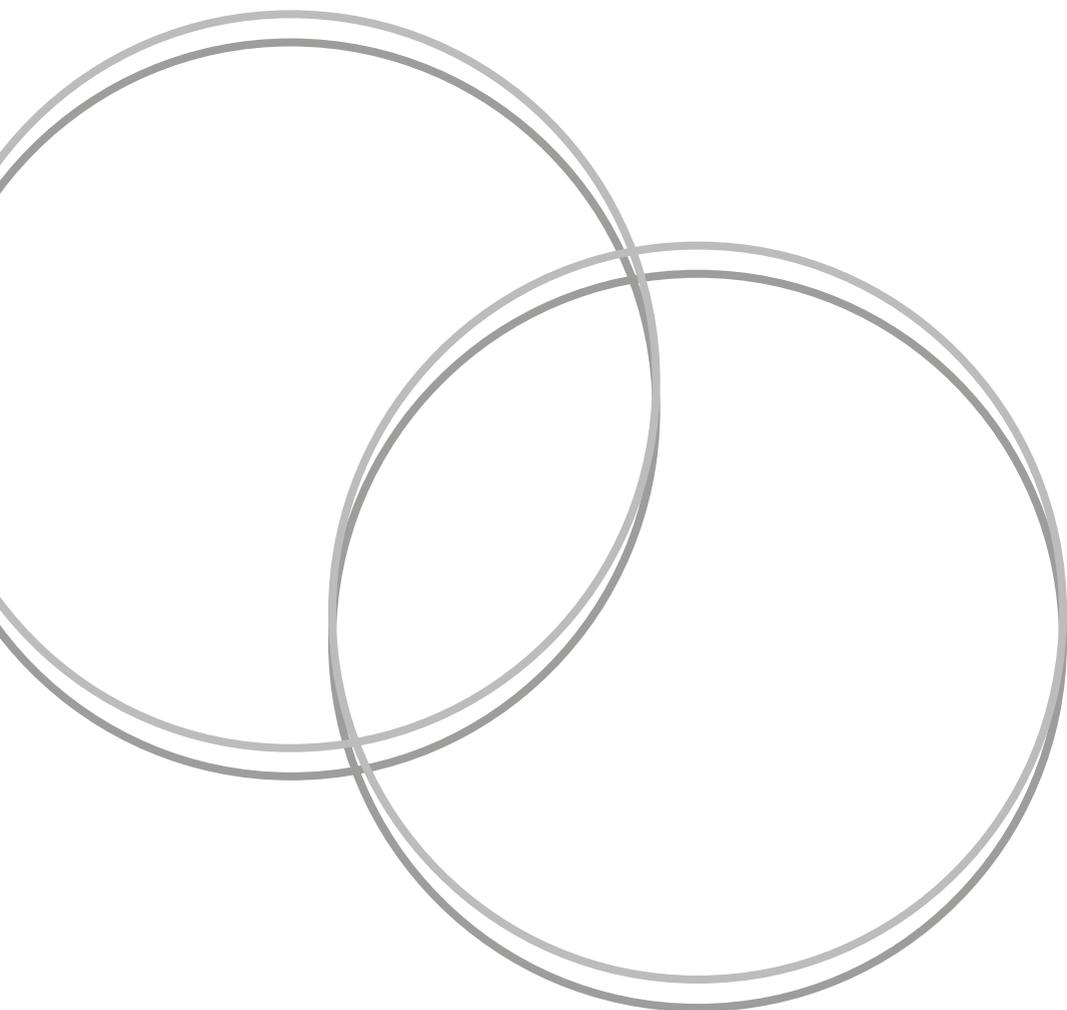




Oxford University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Knee Replacement

**Physiotherapy from the day of  
surgery until day 7**



You have been given this leaflet because you have just had knee replacement surgery. Please be aware that recovery after a knee replacement is slow and gradual. Healing inside the knee takes 3 months or longer and it can be up to 2 years before the muscles around the knee return to a normal strength and you feel that you have fully recovered. This can be frustrating, especially if you want to return to an active job or hobby.

## **Mobility**

There is no specific restriction as to what you can do, but to optimise your recovery it is best to do very little for the first week. You can take as much weight on your operated leg as is comfortable. It is recommended you walk around inside your home for short distances using your walking aid and only carry out very light activities. When sitting down raise your leg on pillows on a stool or chair to help reduce the swelling. Keep your leg straight when you do this. We recommend that you rest in bed for 1 hour twice a day to help reduce the swelling in your knee. Take all your prescribed medications regularly, together they will help your recovery.

# Stairs

It is best to use the banister when using stairs. Hold the banister with one hand and a crutch in the other hand. You will need the spare crutch when you get upstairs so hold it horizontally in a 'T' shape against the handle of the crutch you are using. Remember to carry the spare crutch on the outside of the handle so that if you do drop it, it won't trip you up or hit your legs.

## Sequence for going UP stairs

1. Stand close to the banister
2. Hold the banister rail with one hand
3. Step your unoperated (good) leg up onto the first stair
4. Bring your operated (bad) leg up beside it
5. Place your crutch up on the same stair as your feet

## Sequence for going DOWN stairs

1. Stand close to the banister
2. Hold the banister rail with one hand
3. Put your crutch 1 stair down
4. Step your operated (bad) leg down onto the same stair as your crutch
5. Bring your unoperated (good) leg down beside it



## Swelling

Swelling around your knee is normal and may continue for over a year after your operation. Marked swelling may slow your recovery as it can stop your knee bending and your thigh muscles working effectively.

- The best way to reduce knee swelling is to elevate your whole leg
- For the first few weeks after surgery rest on your bed for 1 hour twice a day
- Raise your leg up on 2 or 3 pillows
- Keep your knee straight
- **DO NOT REST WITH YOUR KNEE BENT** as this makes it more likely to seize up and it may not fully straighten in the long term



## Exercises

In the first days after a knee replacement, it is important to rest. We want you to do only 2 exercises for your knee. We will add more exercises at your hospital appointment in 5-7 days.

### **Exercise 1. Foot and Ankle Exercises**

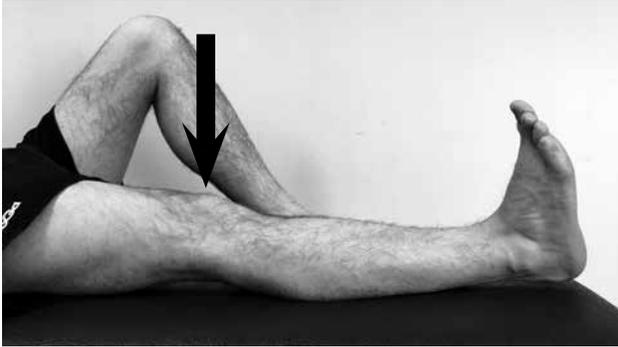
This exercise will improve the circulation in your legs while you are less active



- Lie on your bed and move both feet up and down by pointing your toes and ankles towards you then away from you
- Repeat 10 times every hour
- You can also do this by alternating your feet so the right one is pointed down while the left one is pulled towards you then change direction

## **Exercise 2. Static Quadriceps Contraction**

Your quadriceps are the muscles at the front of your thigh. This exercise starts to get them working again gently after your operation



- Sit or lie with your operated leg stretched straight out in front of you
- Tighten your thigh muscles by pulling your toes up towards you and pushing the back of your knee down into the bed
- Hold for 5 seconds and relax completely
- Aim to repeat 5 times and repeat 5 times a day or as comfortable

## **Your next hospital visit**

An appointment will be made for you to return to the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre 5-7 days after your operation to check that you are recovering as expected. At this appointment you can ask any questions about your recovery and returning to your normal activities. You will have your wound checked and re-dressed and you will be seen by a physiotherapist who will give you advice and progress your rehabilitation with more exercises.

If you have any questions about any of your physiotherapy exercises, please telephone:

**Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre Physiotherapy  
Department:**

Tel: **01865 738 074**

## Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

Author: In-Patient Physiotherapy Team, Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre  
June 2022

Review: June 2025

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
[www.ouh.nhs.uk/information](http://www.ouh.nhs.uk/information)



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