

Exercise is an essential component of the rehabilitation program for a knee injury. Your doctor will prescribe exercises for you to perform that will protect your injury, and, at the same time, strengthen supporting structures. Be sure to do only the exercises and the number of repetitions - your doctor indicates.

STRETCHING EXERCISE

The following exercises should be performed before and after the strengthening exercise, as a warm-up and cool-down phase of your program. Remember not to bounce while you stretch.

Hamstring stretch

Lie on your back with your legs straight. Raise your injured leg clasping your hands at the back of your calf, just above the knee. Push your straight leg backward, into your hands. Relax. Pull your leg slowly toward your body, stretching the muscles in the back of the thigh. Hold the position for 5 seconds, keeping your knee straight. Repeat this exercise, each time pulling your leg closer to your head. Keep the other leg straight on the supporting surface. Do not bounce or pull suddenly or forcefully, as this can strain the muscles.

Quad stretch

Fasten a long belt around the ankle of your injured leg. Lie on your side, holding the free end of the belt, with your good leg straight. Relax your leg. Pull on the belt and attempt to bend the knee further backward. Push the hip forward. Hold the position of maximum stretch during each repetition for at least 5 seconds.

Calf stretch

Stand facing a wall. Place one leg behind the other, with both feet pointed toward the wall. Both heels should be in contact with the floor. Lean forward slowly until you feel a stretch in your calf. Hold for a count of 5 seconds. Relax and repeat. Assume the same position as at the beginning of the calf stretch, but bend your knee slightly and lean forward, stretching the lower portion of your calf muscles. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax and repeat. Alternate feet and repeat again for the other leg.

ISOTONIC EXERCISE

Straight leg raises

Sit with your back straight, your injured leg straight, and your good leg bent. Flex the ankle of your injured leg and tighten your thigh muscle.

Lift your injured leg approximately 8-12 inches from the floor, keeping it straight. Lower it slowly. Relax. You may use 1-lb to 5-lb weights if your leg is stronger.

Perform 3 sets of 8-12 repetitions 2-3 times a day.

Short arc quadriceps

Sit with your back straight and place a rolled towel under the back of your injured knee, slightly bending it. Straighten your leg slowly, raising your foot from the floor. Lower your leg. Keep the back of the knee on the towel at all times. Add weight.

Perform 3 sets of 8-12 repetitions 3 times a day.

Knee flexion

Lie on your stomach and place a small rolled towel under the front of the injured knee. Bend your knee as far as possible. Slowly lower it back to a straight position. Add weight. With any knee pain, decrease frequency or: repetition and/or amount of weight.

Perform 3 sets of 8-12 repetitions 3 times a day.

Hip abduction

Lie on your side the side of your good leg. Keep your leg straight. Bend your other leg (the injured leg) behind you. Raise your injured leg slowly, keeping the knee straight. Lower it slowly. Perform 3 sets of 8-12 repetitions 3 times a day.

Hip adduction

Lie on your side the side of your injured leg. Cross your good leg over your injured leg. Place your foot flat on the floor. Lift the lower leg, keeping the knee straight. Lower it slowly. Perform 3 sets of 8-12 repetitions 3 times a day.

Hip extension

Lie on your stomach with your head resting on your hands. Turn your face away from the side of your injured leg. Lift your injured leg 6 to 8 inches from the floor. Be sure to keep your leg straight. Perform 3 sets of 8-12 repetitions 3 times a day.