

# OrthoKansas, PA

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## **Discharge Instructions following Anterior Cruciate Ligament Reconstruction**

**Jeffrey C. Randall, M.D.    Kenneth L. Wertzberger, M.D.**

Following your surgery and prior to your first postop clinic visit next week, the following exercises are important in order to get your knee moving and prevent stiffness.

1. Use the ice machine as instructed, or as often as possible. When applying the ice you should use it for at least 20 minutes per episode.
2. Keep the wound dry at all times using a plastic bag taped around the top while in the shower. If the incision gets wet, dry it immediately and change your dressing.
3. At home, take the immobilizer off and place a rolled towel under your heel to allow your knee to stretch into extension. DO NOT place the towel or pillow under your knee, as this will bend your knee making extension difficult to gain. Restoring normal extension equal to your other knee is VERY important and needs to be addressed right away. Perform this 2-3 times a day for 10-15 minutes each time.
4. When you change the dressing, gently move your patella (kneecap) both side to side, and up and down to prevent it from becoming stiff. Don't worry as it is supposed to move freely.
5. Ankle pumps – move your ankle up and down frequently throughout the day. This will help the circulation in the calf and prevent the calf from swelling excessively.
6. Crutches and the immobilizer should be used at all times while ambulating. You may put as much weight as you feel comfortable on the knee, as long as you are wearing your knee immobilizer.
7. To increase the bend (flexion) in your knee: while lying down, slide your heel toward your buttock as far as you can into your pain tolerable range. Then slide it back straight. After 2-3 days you can also try wall slides in which you lay on your back with your operative leg up on the wall, supported by your nonoperative leg. Allow gravity to assist your operative heel to slide down the wall, bending your operative knee. To return, use your nonoperative leg to push your heel back up the wall straightening your operative knee. Perform after ice 2-3 times a day for 10-15 minutes each time.
8. With the leg straight and immobilizer open, place a rolled towel under your knee, tighten the quad muscles in the front of the thigh and hold for a count of 5. Do this 2-3 times a day. Repeat 25-30 reps each time.
9. Should you have any questions about these exercises, check with your therapist at the hospital before discharge, or if home, call Randy at the office.
10. You will be seen one week after surgery to have the small sutures removed and receive more exercise instructions.