

# Total Knee Replacement

**Resuming normal activities:** Once you get home, you should continue to stay active. The key is to remember not to overdo it! While you can expect some good days and some bad days, you should notice a gradual improvement and a gradual increase in your endurance over the next 6 to 12 months.

The ultimate goals for your rehabilitation are based on how you were doing before your joint began to bother you. Most people have had this joint pain for several years. You have to unlearn the bad habits you've developed, build up weak muscles and learn new movement patterns.

The following guidelines are generally applicable, but the final answer on each of these issues should come from your doctor and physical therapist.



## Walking

1. Use walker/crutches until your physical therapist says you no longer need them. Most people use a walker for 2-4 weeks and then progress to a cane for 2 weeks.
2. Stairs: Always go up with your stronger leg first followed by the operated leg and assistive device. To go down: assistive device first, then stronger leg. Going up and down stairs step over step is the last skill you will obtain.

## Positioning

1. Do not put a pillow under your knee while in bed or sitting. This will eventually keep your knee from straightening and cause a lot of problems in standing.

## Swelling

You can expect swelling in you knee and leg for up to a year after surgery. To help reduce or prevent swelling, do the following:

1. Elevate your leg above your heart. Do ankle pumps at least every hour.
2. Put ice packs on the operated knee.
3. Do not use creams such as Ben Gay, Icy Hot, etc.



## Exercise

- Follow exercise instructions given by your physical therapist. Continue working on exercise forever as this knee will require consistent exercise.
- Swimming may be started as soon as your incision heals. Be sure access into pool is a ramp or steps. Do not go up/down ladder or sit on side of pool.

## Activities (Next 6-8 weeks)

- Do not drive until given permission by your doctor or physical therapist.
- You may shower once your incision is healed or advised by your doctor.
- Avoid high-heeled shoes or slip-on slippers. Wear good walking or tennis shoes.
- Avoid scatter rugs. Put them away while walking with an assistive device.