

Emergency Department

Knee and Leg Injury: Care Advice

Ice

The application of “cold” following an injury helps reduce swelling and pain. Wrap a bag of frozen peas in a damp towel before applying to the skin to prevent an ice burn. Hold the ice in place for 10-20 minutes and repeat this every two hours until the swelling and/or 'heat' from the injury has gone away. Do this for at least the first 48 hours.

Rest and elevation

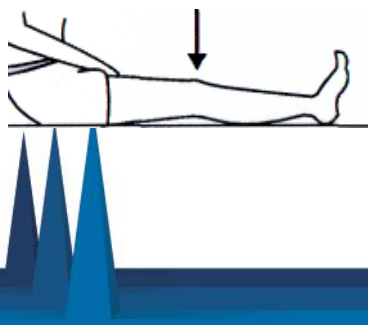
It is important to rest the injured area more than usual during the early phase of healing this prevents the area being stressed. Elevating the leg will help to reduce swelling. To elevate, sit on a sofa or bed, put some pillows on the sofa and put your foot on the pillows. Your foot should be higher than your hip. However, you should not rest completely as this will slow your recovery.

Exercises

Following knee or thigh injury it is important to maintain the strength of the knee muscles. The strength of the quadriceps (main thigh muscle) is vital to knee stability and the prevention of further injury. You should start these exercises as soon as possible and try to do them at least four times a day. Try to do each one 10 times until you are better.

Exercise 1: Tensing the thigh muscles

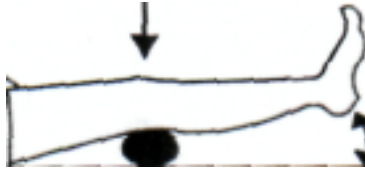
Sit with your leg straight out in front of you. Tighten the muscles at the front of the thigh, pushing the knee down. Hold the contraction for three seconds.



Patient Information

Exercise 2: Heel lifts

Sit or lie with a rolled-up towel under the knee. Keep the knee down on the towel and raise the heel. Straighten the knee completely and hold for 3 seconds.



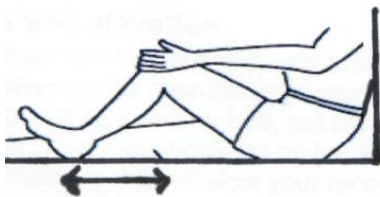
Exercise 3: Straight leg raise

Lie or sit back against a support. Tighten the thigh muscles, straighten the knee and lift the whole leg up six inches from the bed or floor. Hold for three seconds.



Exercise 4: Knee bends

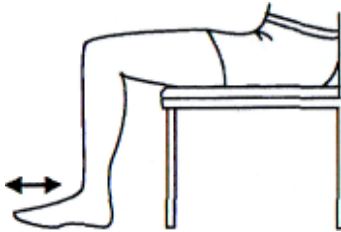
Sit or lie with legs out straight. Bend your knee and hip by sliding your heel towards your bottom. Do not hold this exercise. You can make it easier using a slippery surface.



Patient Information

Exercise 5: Straightening knee from sitting

Sit on a chair. Straighten your knee from a bent position. Hold out straight for three seconds.



For further information and advice contact your GP.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please ask the staff and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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Document History

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