



PETER HARDCASTLE
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON

Knee Arthroscopy

Recovery & Exercises



Knee Arthroscopy – Recovery and Exercises

What To Expect:

Generally, the 2-3 small cuts will not require stitches.

After your surgery, a waterproof dressing will be applied, and it should stay undisturbed for 10 -14 days. An additional pad and crepe bandage will be placed around the knee to help control bruising and swelling however, you can remove this bandage the following day to allow for movement and exercises.

At the time of your operation, some local anaesthetic will be put in your knee. This helps with initial pain control, but as it wears off you may experience some discomfort. You can assist pain reduction and management of swelling by raising your leg several times daily, and applying ice over the knee. It is common to experience numbness of the skin around the knee, and this usually improves but can sometimes take as long as 12-18 months to settle. Unfortunately, some people are left with permanent numbness.

Your knee discomfort and swelling should gradually reduce within the first 6-8 weeks after your operation. This will depend on your level of activity, although it is entirely normal for the knee still to have some swelling at the 6 week stage. The exercises below will help your knee to function, and assist in your recovery. Avoid any impact or contact activities, e.g. football, tennis, etc. for at least 6 weeks following your operation. Return to normal activities as you feel able.

It may take 3-4 months for your knee to return to normal and it is common to find it difficult or uncomfortable to kneel.

Exercises:

It is recommended that you start the below exercises **the day after** your surgery.

1. Knee Flexion or Extension:

Sit with a sliding board or polythene bag under your leg. Bend and straighten your hip and knee by sliding your foot up and down the board. Do this 10 times. Then, repeat each set of 10 2-3 times daily. Continue to do all of the above 2-3 times daily until the movement of your operated leg is equal to the other.

2. Passive Knee Extension:

Sit on a chair, supporting your operated leg on another chair. Let your leg straighten in this position. Remain in this position for 15 minutes to allow the knee to stretch. Slowly bend the knee to take it off the chair. This exercise will assist you to regain full straightening of the knee. Repeat 1-2 times. Stop when you have regained full straightening.

3. Static Quadriceps Strengthening:

Sit with your legs straight. Pull your toes up and push your knee straight by tightening the muscles on the front of your thigh. Hold for 5 seconds, and then relax. Do this 10 times. Then repeat each set of 10 2-3 times daily.



4. Quadriceps Strengtheners:

Sit with a rolled up towel (or pillow) under the knee. Pulling toes up, press the back of the knee into the roll and lift the heel off the board by tightening the muscles at the front of the thigh. Hold for 5 seconds – relax. Do this 10 times. Then, repeat each set of 10 2-3 times daily.

5. Straight Leg Lift (Knee Strengthening):

Sit with one leg straight and the other leg bent. Exercise your straight leg by pulling the toes up, straightening the knee and lifting the leg 20cm (8 inches) off the bed. Hold for 5 seconds – then slowly lower. Do this 10 times. Then repeat each set of 10 2-3 times daily. Progress onto exercises 6-8 about 4-6 weeks after your operation or as you are able.

6. Wall Slide:

Stand leaning with your back against a wall and your feet about 20cm (8 inches) from the wall. Slowly slide down the wall and back up. Only as far as your knee pain allows up to a maximum of 45 degrees of knee bending. Do this 10 times. Then repeat this set of 10 2-3 times daily.

7. Mini Squat:

Standing with support available. Squeeze a ball/foam wedge/ towel between your knees. Continuously squeeze while gently bending your knees as far as pain allows or up to 45 degrees of bending. Return to standing. Relax squeeze. Do this 10 times Then repeat this set of 10 2-3 times daily.

8. Step Up:

Stand in front of a 15cm step. Step up with your operated leg leading, making sure that your operated leg stays on the step taking the weight. Repeat this on the other side. Lower the height of the step if you need to. Repeat 10-30 times as able, repeat on the other side. Aim to do the same on each side. Progress by increasing the height of the step.