



# Knee arthroscopy: aftercare advice

## Information for patients from Physiotherapy

### What is knee arthroscopy?

Knee arthroscopy is a common surgery which helps diagnose and treat disorders of the knee. It is usually carried out under a general anaesthetic (you are asleep for the procedure) as a day case. General anaesthetic can temporarily affect your co-ordination and reasoning skills, so you must not drink alcohol, operate heavy machinery, or sign legal documents for 48 hours after surgery.

### When will I be able to walk on my operated leg?

Following your operation you will be allowed to fully weight bear on your operated leg, unless you have been given specific instructions by your consultant or physiotherapist. The physiotherapist will provide you with a pair of crutches and teach you how to use them. You can progress to one crutch then no crutches when you can walk comfortably without a limp. Please return the crutches to the Day Surgery Centre at Kent and Canterbury Hospital when they are no longer needed.

### Advice for going up and down stairs using crutches

Please go up and down stairs one step at a time. Please note one crutch and one rail/bannister is always safer.

#### Going up and down stairs using one crutch



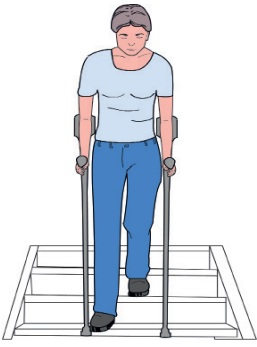
Lead with your good leg, and then bring the crutch and operated leg up to meet the good leg.



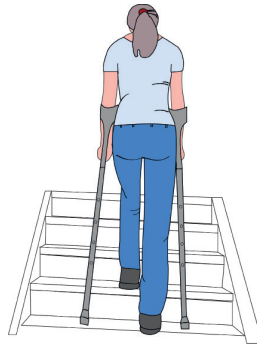
The crutch and your operated leg go down the step first, followed by your good leg.



## Going up and down stairs using two crutches



The crutches and your operated leg go down the step first, followed by your good leg.



Lead with your good leg, and then bring the crutches and your operated leg up to meet your good leg.

### How do I look after my dressing?

Unless told differently by your doctors or ward staff, the crepe bandages should be removed 48 to 72 hours after your surgery, leaving the Mepore dressing over your knee until you return to the clinic for your outpatient appointment, or as advised.

Before you leave hospital, you should be told by ward staff whether or not you will need to come back to clinic and when your stitches will need to come out.

### My knee hurts and is swelling, is this normal?

It is normal to experience some pain and swelling of your knee following your operation. Continue to take pain relief as prescribed/advised and elevate (raise) your leg. Once the dressing has been removed an ice pack, for example a packet of frozen peas wrapped in a damp tea towel, can be placed on your knee for 15 minutes every hour to control the amount of swelling. Please make sure there is something waterproof between this and the wound dressing to avoid infection. Please note that once defrosted the peas should not be eaten.

If your knee swells a lot, this may mean that you are doing too much. Do not stop walking or doing the exercises, just change how many you do.

### When can I drive again?

You should be able to drive for short periods of time seven to 14 days after your operation, if your knee is pain free and you have enough strength to control the foot pedals and make an emergency stop. If you contact your car insurance company they will be able to discuss this with you in more detail.

### **When can I return to work?**

There are no medical rules with regards to returning to work following knee arthroscopy; this depends on your job. If you have a desk job you may return to work quickly, however, if you have a manual job you may need more time off. If you have any concerns, please discuss them with your consultant and/or physiotherapist.

### **Will I have a follow-up appointment at the hospital?**

You will have a routine follow-up appointment with your consultant, usually two to six weeks after your operation. You will only be referred to outpatient physiotherapy if your consultant or physiotherapist think it necessary.

### **When can I start playing sports again?**

After your follow-up appointment, if your knee is healing well, a gradual return to sport and other leisure activities can begin. If you have any concerns regarding specific activities, please discuss these with your consultant and/or physiotherapist.

### **What if I have any queries or concerns after discharge from hospital?**

If you have any queries or you experience increased pain after surgery, please contact the Day Surgery Centre at Kent and Canterbury Hospital and speak to a member of staff.

- **Canterbury Day Surgery Centre, Kent and Canterbury Hospital**

Telephone: 01227 78 31 14 (7:30am to 8pm)

Telephone: 07887 68 76 45 (8pm to 7:30am)

**Please remember that each patient is individual and will recover differently. Your progress largely depends on how much effort you put in. Self motivation is crucial to achieve the best outcome.**

## Physiotherapy exercises following knee arthroscopy

Following your knee arthroscopy the aim is to regain full range of movement of your knee and restore your muscle strength. It is important that you do the following exercises at least three times a day. The exercises that involve bending your knee will be limited due to your bandage and will be easier once it has been removed, but please try the exercises in the meantime.

### Exercise one (figure 1)

- Lie on your back, on a bed, with your legs straight
- Bend your ankle, point your toes to the ceiling, and push your operated knee down firmly against the bed
- Hold for 10 seconds, then slowly relax
- Repeat 10 times.



Figure 1

### Exercise two (figure 2)

- Lie on your back, on a bed
- Bend and straighten your operated leg as much as possible
- Repeat 10 times.



Figure 2

### Exercise three (figure 3)

- Lie on your back, on a bed
- Place a rolled towel under your operated knee
- Lift your heel off the bed to straighten your knee (keep the back of your knee on the roll)
- Try to hold for 10 seconds, then slowly lower
- Repeat 10 times.



Figure 3

### Exercise four (figure 4)

- Lie on your back, on a bed
- Lift your operated leg off the bed, keeping your knee straight and toes pulled up
- Slowly lower your leg
- Progress to holding your leg in this position for 10 seconds
- Repeat 10 times.



Figure 4

### Exercise five (figure 5)

- Sit on a chair
- Lift your operated leg off the floor to straighten your knee
- Try holding this position for 10 seconds
- Slowly lower your leg
- Repeat 10 times.



Figure 5

### Exercise six (figure 6)

- Sit on a chair with your feet on the floor
- Bend your knee as much as possible
- Repeat 10 times.



Figure 6

### Exercise seven (figure 7)

- Stand, holding onto a chair for support
- Bend your knee and lift your foot off the floor towards your buttocks
- Try to hold this position for 10 seconds
- Lower your foot to the floor
- Repeat 10 times.



Figure 7

**This leaflet has been produced with and for patients**

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**Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments** please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email [ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site [www.ekhft.nhs.uk/patientinformation](http://www.ekhft.nhs.uk/patientinformation)