

OrthoBethesda Therapy Services

Knee Scope Post-Operative Patient Instructions

Below is a list of instructions to follow during the first few weeks after your knee scope. It is extremely important that they are followed in order to maximize your recovery process and avoid complications. Your physical therapist or physician will notify you if there are any exceptions to these rules for your case. If you have any questions, please ask the physical therapist or physician.

Weight Bearing:

Weight-bearing through your operated leg is permitted and encouraged following the surgery. Your physician will notify you if this is not the case. It is important that you place weight through your operated leg as early as possible following your operation to prevent muscles in that leg from weakening.

Activity Modifications:

It is important to walk on a regular basis following your operation. Non-impact activity, such as use of a stationary bike, may also be appropriate during the initial weeks following your procedure. It is important to avoid pivoting, squatting, or high-impact activity for at least 6 weeks following surgery. Speak with the therapist and/or physician regarding further details for activity modifications following your particular procedure during the initial weeks, as well as long-term instructions. This will be determined based on the integrity of your knee cartilage and the size of the meniscal tear.

Crutch Use:

Initially, two crutches should be used while walking. You may discontinue use of the crutches once you feel comfortable doing so. Most people are off crutches within 1 to 4 days.

Incisions:

Keep this area clean during the first few weeks after surgery until all incisions have healed. If you have sutures, the physical therapist will remove them during the first week after your surgery. Notify the physician or physical therapist if you notice any drainage or odor coming from your incisions.

Showering:

Once the physical therapist has removed your bandaging, it is safe to shower. It is important to avoid submerging the operated leg underwater. Avoid scrubbing over the incisions. When drying yourself after a shower, pat the incisional area dry with a towel.

Driving:

Driving may be resumed once you feel comfortable doing so and are no longer taking narcotic pain medication. Do not drive if you do not feel safe doing so.

Knee Mobility:

It is important to adhere to your home exercise program on a regular basis to regain your knee flexibility as quickly as possible following the operation. The physical therapist will provide you with an individualized home program that is specific to your needs. It is important to frequently move your knee. You should not sit in one position for longer than 45 minutes at a time.

Management of Pain and Swelling:

Pain and swelling are expected in your knee following surgery. However, it is important to notify the physical therapist or physician if you begin to notice significant swelling or sharp pain in your calf area. Although unlikely, this could be a sign of a blood clot.

To help decrease the swelling in your operated knee, lie on your back with the operated leg propped up so that it is elevated higher than your heart. This should be done frequently throughout the day until swelling has subsided. Initially following your operation, it may be appropriate to do this several times a day.

Application of ice over your operated knee may help to manage pain and decrease inflammation following your surgery. This should be done for 15 minutes at a time, followed by at least 45 minutes without ice. Initially following your operation, it is appropriate to use ice several times a day. Use of ice can be combined with elevation of your leg, as explained above.

Speak with the physician regarding appropriate use of pain medications.