



Edward S. Chang, MD
Board Certified Orthopedic Sports Medicine Surgeon

Post-Operative Instructions Following PCL Reconstruction

Inova Orthopaedics and
Sports Medicine

OFFICE LOCATIONS

TUESDAY

8100 Innovation Park
Drive
Fairfax, VA 22031
T 703-970-6464
F 703-970-6465

WEDNESDAY

1005 N. Glebe Rd
Suite 410
Arlington, VA 22201
T 571-414-6940
F 703-970-6465

THURSDAY

FRIDAY (AM only)
6355 Walker Lane
Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22310
T 703-797-6980
F 703-797-6981

CLINICAL NURSE

Eileen Perri, BSN
(703) 797-6918

COMFORT

1. Elevation

With your knee straight, elevate your knee and ankle above the level of your heart. The best way is to lie down with a minimum of two pillows lengthwise under your entire lower leg. This should be done as much as possible, especially in the first 3-5 days following surgery.

2. Icing

Place crushed ice in a plastic bag over your knee for no more than 20 minutes, 3-4x/day. If you rented an ice machine, please use 20-30 minutes every 1-2 hours as needed (No Compression for the first week). You may undo the brace straps and place the wrap over the ACE bandage.

Place a thin towel between your skin and ice/wrap to prevent ice burns.

MEDICATIONS

1. Pain Medication

You will be prescribed a narcotic pain medication. Please take as prescribed and only as often as necessary. If you had a regional block performed, it is recommended you start taking medication when you regain sensation in your toes. Avoid alcohol and driving while on these medications.

2. Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatories (NSAIDs) (Over the Counter)

If you have severe pain, you may take one or two Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) or 1 Naproxen (Aleve) in between dosage of pain medication.

3. Aspirin (Prevention of Blood Clots-Over the Counter)

If you taking birth control medication: Take one adult aspirin (325 mg) daily for 4 weeks starting the day AFTER surgery. Please discontinue NSAIDs once you are on Aspirin. This is to help prevent blood clots after surgery.

4. Colace (Over the Counter)

Constipation following surgery is common. You may take a stool softener such as Colace. If constipation lasts more than 3 days, you may take over the counter laxatives such as Milk of Magnesia, Bisacodyl, or Miralax). If symptoms persist, please contact your primary care doctor

5. Antibiotics

Depending on your surgery, an antibiotic may be prescribed. Please begin when you return home on the day of surgery and take as directed until the medication is gone.



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ACTIVITIES

1. Exercises

These help prevent complications such as blood clotting in your legs. Point and flex your foot and wiggle your toes starting the day of your operation.

The day after your surgery, please refer to the illustrated exercises provided. These should be done 10-15 repetitions, 3 times a day.

2. Knee Brace

Keep the brace locked straight (in extension) until you are evaluated at your first post-operative visit. After your first post-operative visit, you may unlock the brace while sitting but then lock the brace straight before standing. The brace will be unlocked to ambulate at the discretion of Dr. Chang and/or your physical therapist.

Sleep with the brace on for 1-2 weeks, as directed by Dr. Chang. The brace is to be generally worn for 6 weeks following surgery.

3. Weight Bearing Status

Unless directed by Dr. Chang, you may bear full weight on your operative leg with your brace in the **locked straight** position. Exceptions including if you had a meniscal root repair, microfracture or other cartilage surgery, or collateral ligament repair (MCL/LCL) or reconstruction.

Do this within the limits of your pain. Two crutches should be used until otherwise directed by Dr. Chang or your physical therapist.

4. Physical Therapy

PT should be started **within 3-5 days** after surgery. If you have not already scheduled your physical therapy appointment, please do so as soon as possible. A rehab protocol will be provided to you today and should be given to the therapist at your first session. This paperwork provides specific guidelines from Dr. Chang for the physical therapist to follow during your rehabilitation.

5. Driving

Driving is **NOT** permitted for 6 weeks following right knee surgery.

Following left knee surgery, you may drive following you are **off** narcotic pain medication and your knee can flex to 90 degrees. You may then unlock your brace to drive.

6. Athletic Activities

Athletics including swimming, cycling, jogging, running and stop and go sports **may not** be resumed until you are cleared by Dr. Chang.

7. Return to Work/School

Your ability to work depends on a number of factors including your level of discomfort and how demanding your job or school is. If you have any questions or concerns about working, please discuss these issues with Dr. Chang during your first post-op visit.



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WOUND CARE

1. Keep the dressing clean and dry after surgery. You may remove the dressing 3 days after surgery. The Steri-Strips (small white tape that is directly on the incision areas) should be **left on** until the first office visit.

2. Apply a similar dressing utilizing a sterile 4x4" gauze and a 6" Ace Wrap (you may reuse ACE wrap). This can be purchased at CVS or any drugstore.

Please change the 4x4" gauze dressing daily.

3. You may shower 2-3 days after surgery. You must keep the incision **DRY**. This may be by wrapping a clean garbage bag to keep the surgical site as dry as possible. You may sit on a shower bench or a sturdy chair/stool early on for safety.

DO NOT bear weight on your operative leg while the brace is off.

Sit on the chair, remove the brace, shower, dry off and then put the brace back on before standing. Immediately apply a new dressing to cover the surgical site.

4. Baths/Soaking/Swimming should be avoided for 2 months following surgery.

EATING

Your first few meals after surgery should include light, easily digestible foods and plenty of liquids as some people experience nausea as a temporary reaction to anesthesia.

CALL YOUR PHYSICIAN IF:

1. Pain in the back of your ankle persists or worsens in the first few days after surgery.
2. Excessive redness or drainage of cloudy or bloody material from the wounds (clear red tinted fluid and some mild drainage should be expected). New drainage of any kind 5 days after surgery should be reported.
3. You have a temperature greater than 101 F.
4. You have pain, swelling or redness in your calf.
5. You have numbness or weakness in your leg or foot.
6. You have any foul-smelling drainage from the dressing/splint.

Business Hours: Please call our clinical nurse (703) 797-6918.

After hours: You may call (703) 797-6980 during non-business hours to reach the answering service. Problems requiring immediate attention are then forwarded to the medical staff.

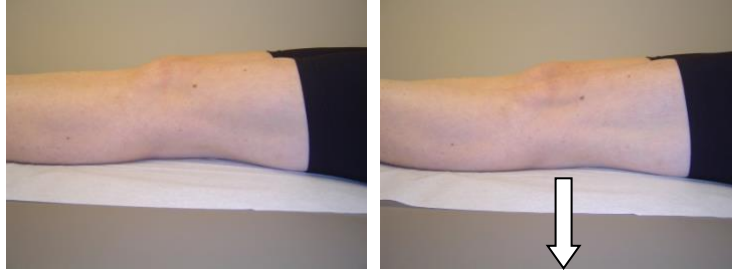
RETURN TO THE OFFICE

You may return to see Dr. Chang 7-10 days after your surgery. If you have not made your postoperative appointment already, please call (703) 797-6980. Please confirm the office location as Dr. Chang sees patients in multiple locations.

POST-OPERATIVE KNEE EXERCISES

Perform sets of 10-15 repetitions, 3-4 times a day
Begin the day after surgery
You may remove the brace for all exercises except #2.

1. Quadriceps Isometrics (Quad Sets)



Lie flat or sit with your surgical leg straight. Tighten the muscle in the front of your thigh as much as you can, pushing the back of your knee flat against the floor/bed. Hold this tight for 5 seconds then relax.

2. Straight Leg Raises (SLR)



Lie flat or sit with your leg straight and your knee brace on (if you have one). You may have your non-operative knee bent slightly for comfort. Perform a Quad set (as above) and flex your toes straight up. Lift your heel off of the floor/bed and hold for at least 5 seconds. Keep your thigh muscle as tight as you can and lower your heel back down. Relax.

3. Heel Slides



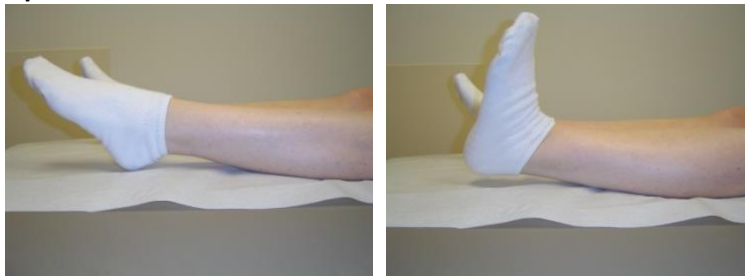
Lie flat or sit with your leg straight. Slide your heel toward your hip. Try to get your knee bent to a 90° angle. Slide your heel back so your leg is straight. Relax.

4. Seated Knee Flexion



Sit with your legs dangling over the bed. Relax your leg allowing gravity to bend your knee. You may use your non-operative leg to gently push your operative leg into more of a bend. Maintain this position for up to 10 minutes.

5. Calf Pumps



Point and flex your toes to tighten your calf muscles.

6. Knee Extension (Lying Down)



While lying down, rest your ankle on a towel roll so that your knee and calf are not touching the floor. Allow gravity to straighten your knee. Maintain this position for up to 10 minutes.

7. Knee Extension (Sitting in a Chair)



While sitting in a chair, prop your heel on another chair so that there is nothing behind your calf or knee. Allow gravity to straighten your knee. Maintain this position for up to 20 minutes.