Begin these exercises 2 days after surgery. Start slowly with each exercise and increase as tolerated up to 10 repetitions of each exercise, making sure to fine a “happy medium” between doing too many or not doing enough. Try to exercise once 3-4 times each day, with the goal of 10 repetitions but progressing as comfort permits. All of the exercises should be done seated on a flat surface.

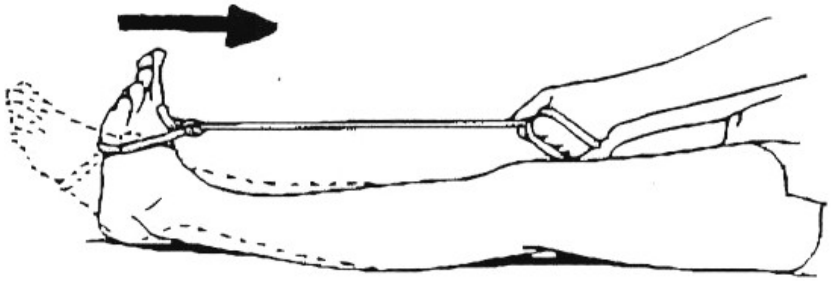
1. HEEL SLIDES: To work the range of motion of the affected knee begin with the leg straight then gently bend the knee sliding the heel toward you until tightness or a stretch is felt. Hold for 5-10 seconds, relax and straighten the knee and repeat 10 times (if discomfort progress slowly). These may be done with or without the aid of a towel.

If you have had an ACL reconstruction your range of motion limitation is 90° otherwise your goal is full range of motion.



To help straighten the knee and obtain extension perform Achilles tendon and hamstring stretching.

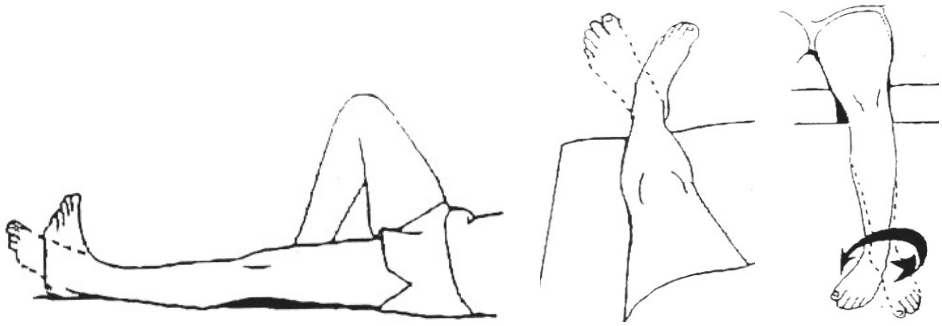
2. ACHILLES TENDON STRETCHING: With the affected leg straight, wrap a towel around your foot and gently pull your toes toward you until you feel a stretch in the calf. Hold for 10-15 seconds relax and repeat 10 times.



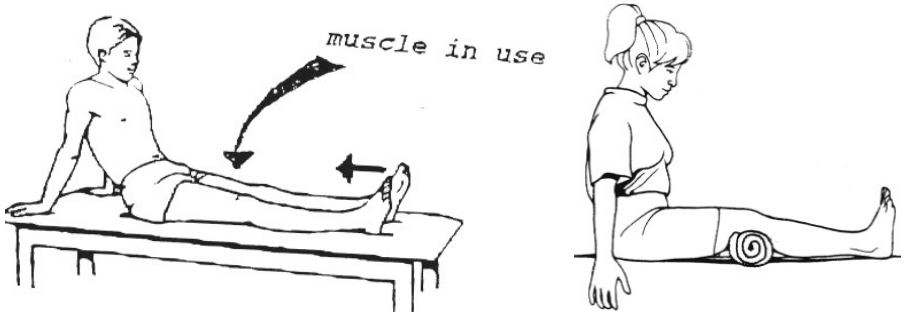
3. SEATED HAMSTRING STRETCHING: Bend the unaffected knee. Keep the affected leg straight andlean forward bending at the waist until a stretch is felt on the back of the thigh. Hold for 10-15 seconds, relax and repeat 10 times.



4. ANKLE PUMPS: Gravity pulls inflammation downward so you may notice swelling into the calf and ankle on the affected side. Ankle pumps will help to circulate this inflammation out of the area and are very important. Move your ankle up, down, in, out and in circles clockwise and counterclockwise. Repeat 20-30 times in each direction. If there is a large amount of swelling perform these with the leg straight and elevated above the level of the heart.



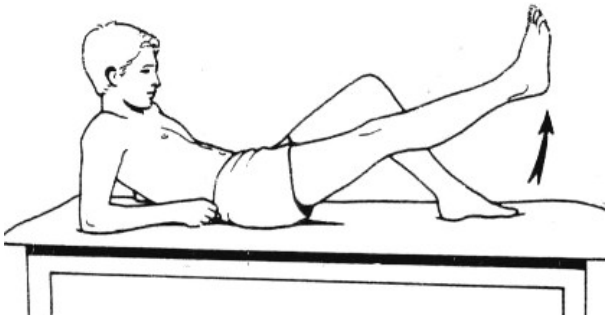
5. QUADRICEPS SETS: Begin with your legs straight in front of you. Pull your toes toward you and contract the muscle on the top of the affected thigh as tightly as possible, just as if you were going to lift your leg. Hold this contraction for 10 seconds, relax and repeat 10 times. Increase repetitions as tolerated.



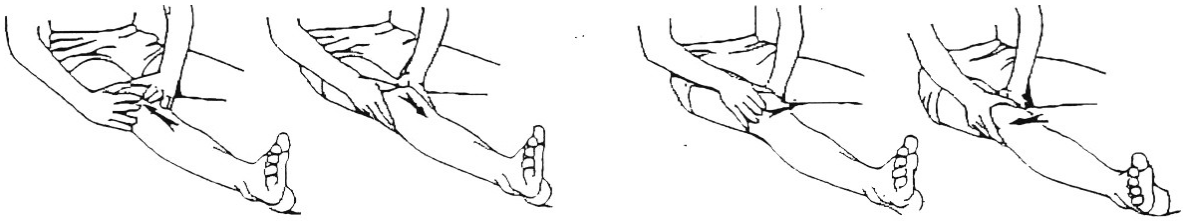
6. HAMSTRING SETS: Bend the affected knee slightly. Gently push your heel into the floor and contract the muscle on the back of the thigh using the floor as resistance without changing the angle of the knee. Hold the contraction for 10 seconds, relax repeat 10 times. Increase repetitions as tolerated.



7. STRAIGHT LEG RAISES: Bend the unaffected knee and proceed by lifting the affected leg so that it is parallel with the opposite thigh. Try to count 3 seconds going up and 3 seconds coming down. Repeat 10 times. Increase repetitions as tolerated.



8. PATELLAR MOBILIZATIONS: In order to bend your knee your kneecap/patella must stay mobile. To prevent scarring down of your kneecap place fingers on either side of it and move it up, down and side to side holding 3 seconds in each direction. Make sure you are moving the kneecap and not just the skin over the top of it. Repeat 10 times in each direction. Increase repetitions as tolerated.
If you have had a **lateral release** you must also do a patellar tilt. Place your thumb on the inner edge of the kneecap to stabilize it and your fingers on the outer edge. Lift up on the outer edge tilting the patella up. Hold for 3 seconds, relax repeat 10 times. Increase repetitions as tolerated.
If you have had a **patellar realignment** move the kneecap only to the inside and up and down.



9. To help get the leg straight when not exercising place a rolled up towel under your ankle so that your knee and heel are off the table. This will help your leg relax and extend.

