



## ACL Reconstruction

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### ACTIVITY:

Leave your post operative brace on at all times except for showers, dressing changes and letting your knee straighten out twice a day as discussed below. Your brace may have been locked in full extension if you had a nerve block at the time of surgery. When you regain muscle control (able to do a straight leg raise) and sensation in your leg you may unlock the brace to allow full motion. The locks are located on each dial on the sides of the brace at your knee level. Just pull the clips back to unlock.

- **Walking:** You may be up and around using pain as a guide. You can put light pressure on the operated foot. As your pain improves, you may increase the amount of pressure on your leg until you are bearing full weight.
- **Crutch use:** You will need them full time except to shower for the first 2 weeks. Wait until you are in therapy and are developing some good control of the leg before you discontinue the crutches. If you go around without any protection, you could slip and injure yourself.
- **Driving:** You may drive if you are not taking narcotic pain medication and are able to put pressure on the leg with minimal pain. This may take 2-3 weeks.

### PAIN CONTROL:

Once you get home, get into bed or a chair and elevate the leg. Put ice on the front of the knee for at least 20 minutes on then 20 minutes off. If you do not feel the cold, then unwrap the ace wrap and put the ice closer to the skin.

***NEVER put ice directly on the skin as this may cause frostbite.*** Use the ice regularly for the first 24-36 hours then intermittently as needed over the next several days.

You have been provided with several medications to manage your post op pain. The most successful approach to controlling your pain is to plan to take your medications on a regular schedule. For your pain medications taking your Hydrocodone or Percocet every four hours is recommended. Take one tablet if your pain is mild take two tablets if your pain is moderate to severe.

Put a pillow, cushion or other pad under the ankle and let the knee go unsupported twice a day as this encourages the knee to drop into a straight position which is what we want. Do not prop the leg up with pillows etc. under the knee. If you find that your leg is sore after you are up for a while, simply get back in bed or a chair, ice the knee down, take a pain pill, and this should settle down. You may be as active as your knee lets you. In the first day or so after surgery, take the pain medicine regularly. Don't wait until the pain is out of control as this makes pain more difficult to manage.

## DRESSING MANAGEMENT:

After 48 hours from the time of surgery, you may take the entire dressing off. It is also okay to shower at this time without the brace. **Do not take a bath or soak your leg.** You may put pressure on the foot and balance yourself in the shower. After your shower, pat the knee dry with a clean towel. Get some gauze pads from the drugstore and put them on the incisions. Then cover it up with the ace wrap.

## PHYSICAL THERAPY:

Formal physical therapy will begin after you are seen for your first post-operative visit. You may begin to bend and straighten the knee as you feel comfortable. Don't force the knee to bend but let it do so using pain as a guide. Try to get your knee straight out on the bed and bending to 90 degrees by your first post op visit. You can also bear weight on the leg. Put light pressure at first with the crutches. If you do not have much discomfort, then increase the pressure gradually. Doing straight leg raises will aid in regaining your upper leg strength and can be performed 2-3 times a day.

Any concerns after surgery should be directed to our office M-Th 7:30-5:00, F 7:30-4:30. Evenings and weekend we have an on-call physician at 651-439-8807 and Orthopedic Urgent Care located at:

High Pointe Health Campus  
8650 Hudson Blvd.,  
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Any questions, please do not hesitate to call our office.

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