

HEALTH FOR LIFE

Guidelines For Knee Rehabilitation

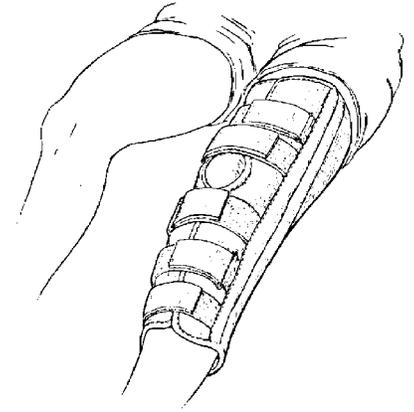
Full recovery from your total knee replacement surgery is going to take months. The information in this section will help you understand your recovery and care at home. Exercises are included to help you be an active partner in your care and recovery.

Guidelines To Protect Your New Knee Joint

Your new knee has a limited range of motion right after surgery. By following these guidelines, you can help your knee heal well and return to your normal activity level.

- **Knee Immobilizer**

You may be instructed to wear a special knee brace called a knee immobilizer. This brace is usually worn only when walking. It may be removed when in bed or sitting unless otherwise instructed by your doctor or therapist. You will continue to wear the knee immobilizer when walking until you can do straight leg raises in bed and your doctor or therapist says you may walk without it.

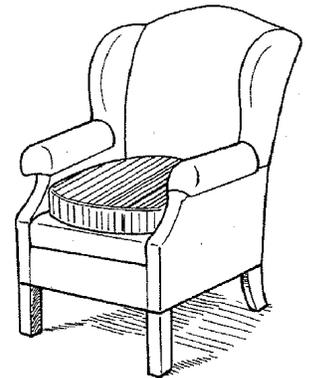


- **Lying**

During the first 24 hours following surgery, your knee will be stiff and may feel more comfortable with a small pillow under your leg. After the first 24 hours, do not place a pillow under your leg when in bed. This will keep your new knee from becoming too stiff and tight. **You may lie in any position that is comfortable for you.**

- **Sitting**

Use a firm, sturdy chair with armrests. Use a cushion or a pillow to raise you up, if needed. Allow your foot to rest on the floor if you can.



- **Walking**

Your Physical Therapist will teach you to use a walker or crutches when you walk until your knee heals. Your therapist and your doctor will tell you how much weight you can safely put on your new knee. After about 6 weeks, your doctor will let you begin using a cane when walking. **Do not squat or kneel on your new knee.**

- ◆ **Your balance might be unsteady for a while.**

- ▶ Use handrails on steps.
- ▶ Wear low-heeled or flat shoes that are firmly secured to your feet.
- ▶ Avoid wet or waxed floors.

Exercises For Knee Rehabilitation

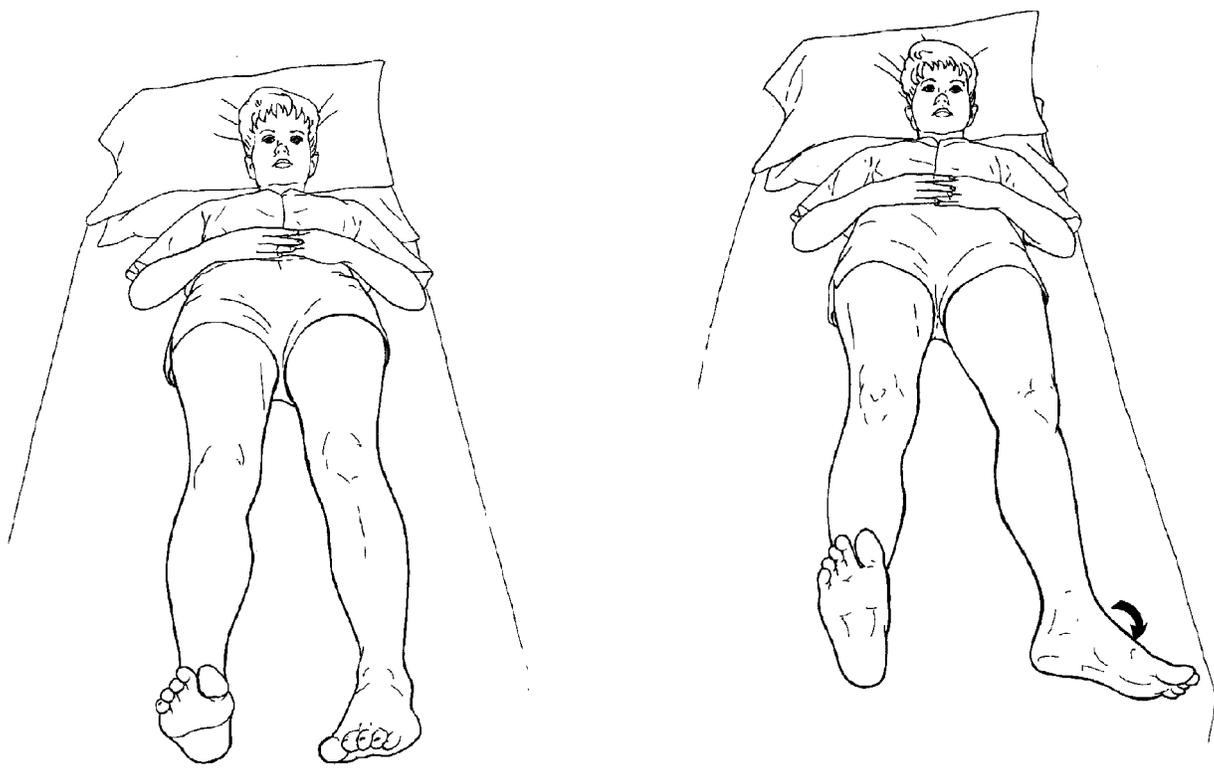
Regaining strength and motion after knee replacement is dependent on **you**. Your motivation at sticking to the exercise program will hasten your return to daily activities.

Do 10 to 15 repetitions of each exercise and repeat the routine 3 times a day. Gradually increase the frequency of the exercises as your knee becomes stronger.

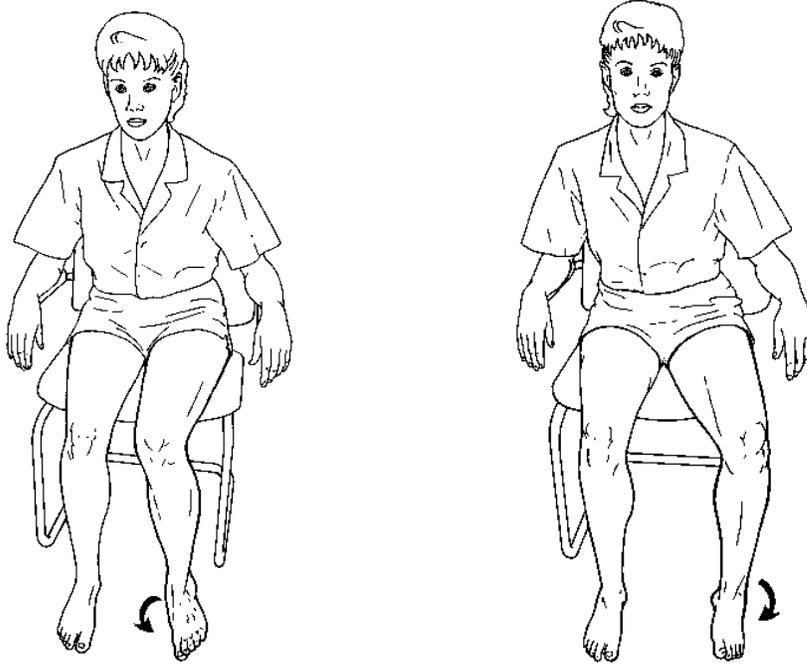
- If excessive swelling occurs, slow down, and allow the swelling to decrease.
- Apply an ice pack to your knee before and after exercises, or anytime in between. Remember to leave the ice on no more that 20 to 30 minutes, and remove it for 20 to 30 minutes before reapplying. Ice will help reduce swelling as well as aches and pains.
- **Caution:** Do not use a pillow under your knee at rest. Your leg needs to be in a fully extended position in order to prevent contractures from developing.

To relax your knee during exercise:

- While lying down, roll your leg from side to side.

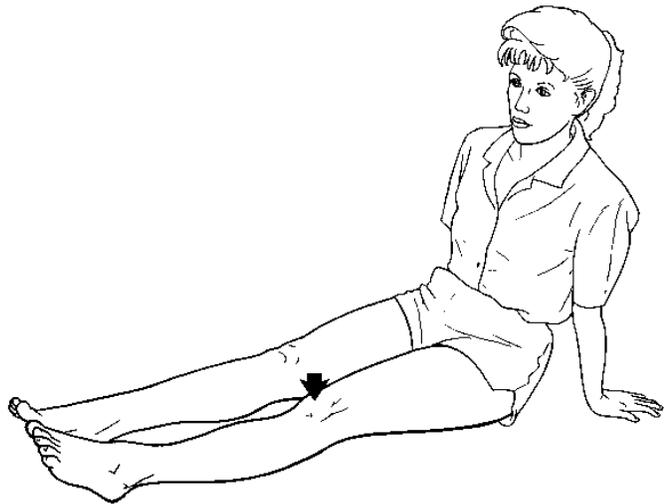


- While sitting, gently rock your foot from left to right.



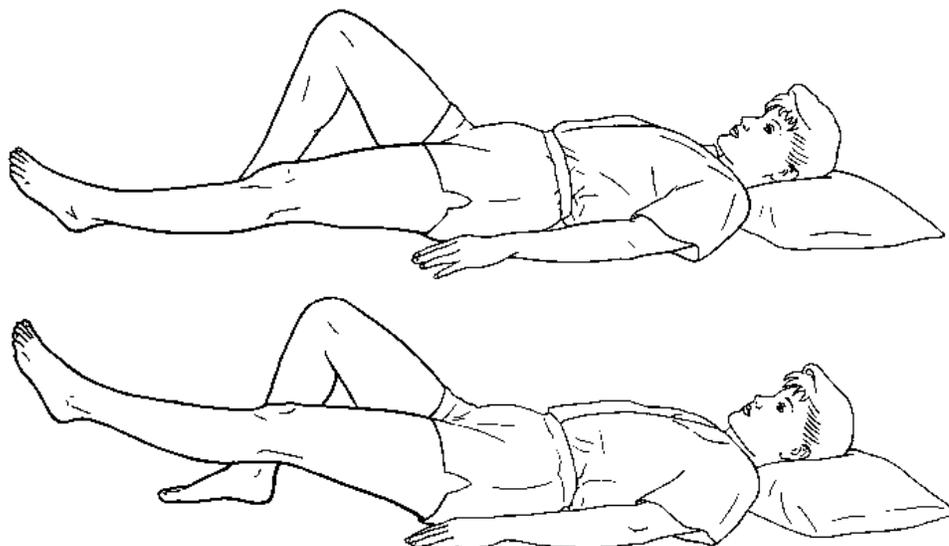
Quadriceps Setting

- Sit or lie on a flat surface.
- Tighten the muscle on the top or front of your thigh and flatten your knee onto the bed. To get the idea, have someone place a hand under your knee. Push your knee into the person's hand.



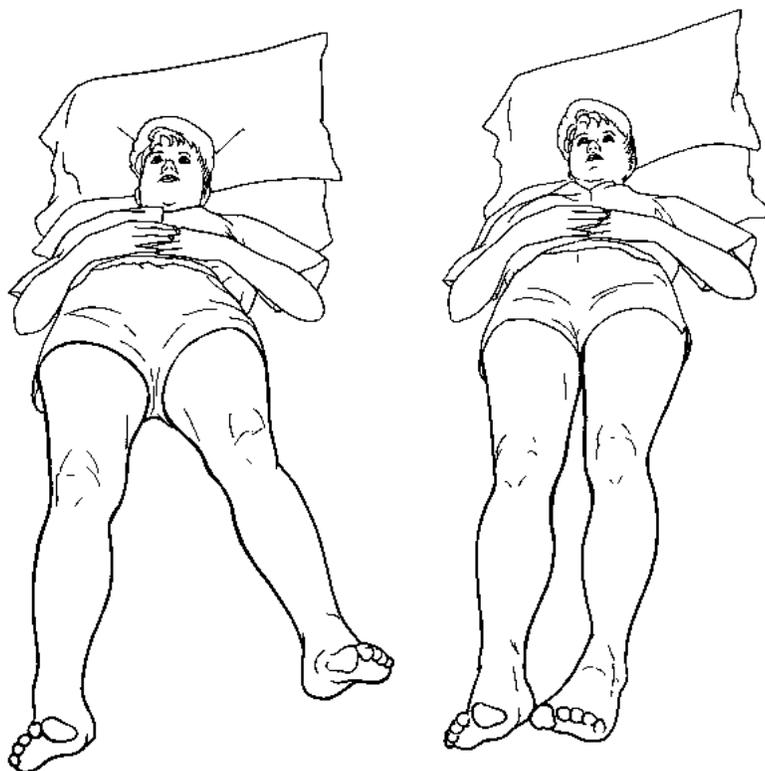
Straight Leg Raising

- Lie on your back with your operated leg extended. Bend your good leg at the knee.
- Hold onto the bed frame and lift your heel slowly off the bed. Raise your leg about 12-24".
- Slowly lower your leg to the bed, keeping your knee straight.



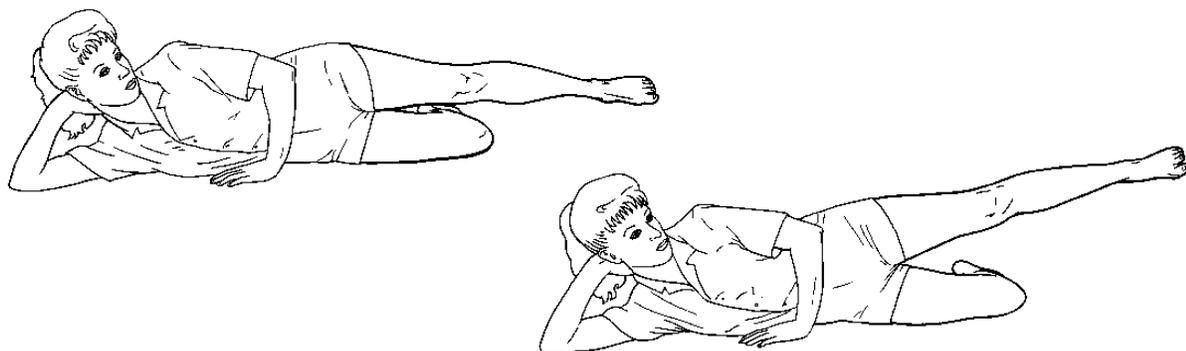
Scissoring

- Lie down on your back with your legs straight. Place a plastic trash bag or a powder board under your operated leg to reduce friction. A powder board is a piece of pressed masonite or a sheet of plastic, sprinkled with powder.
- Keep your toes pointed toward the ceiling.
- Slide your operated leg out to the side (like opening a pair of scissors). Bring the leg back and cross the midline of your body.



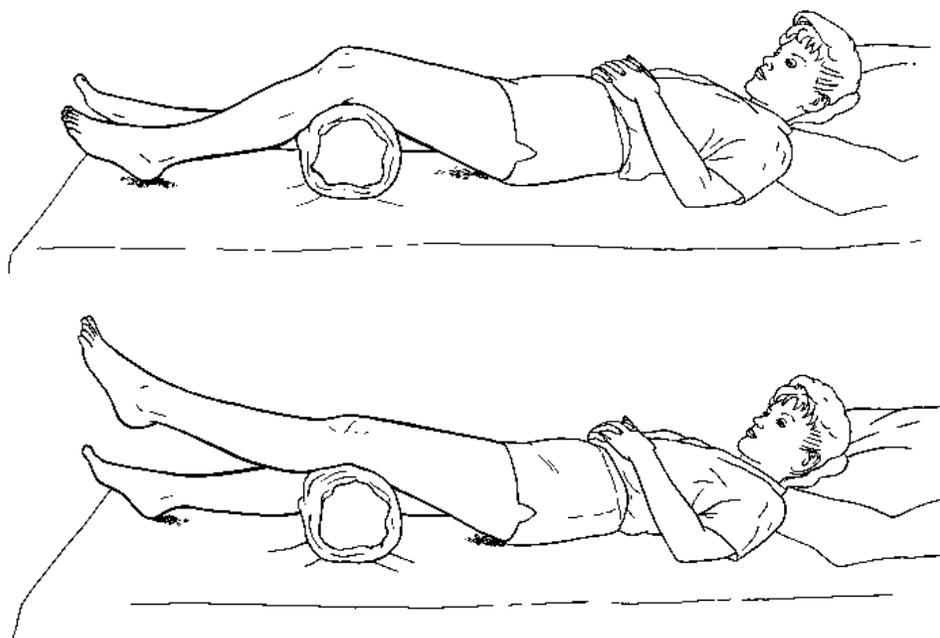
Side Leg Lifts

- Lie on your side with your good leg under you and bent at the knee to keep that position.
- Raise your operated leg 12 inches off the bed.
- Hold, then slowly lower your leg.
- Keep your operated knee straight and your leg in line with your upper body.



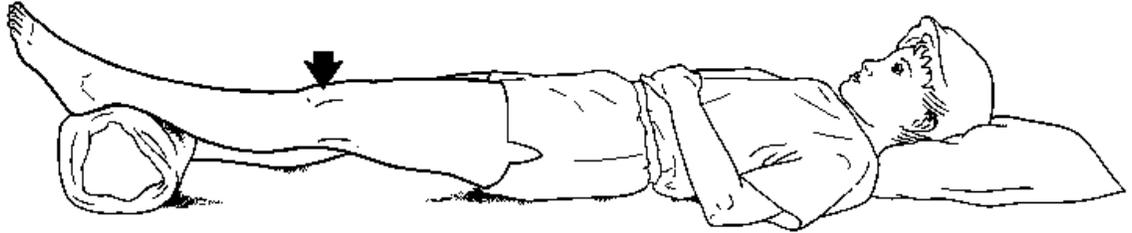
Short Arc Quads (Blanket Roll)

- Place a 3 lb. coffee can under your operated knee at the level of the lower thigh on the good leg side.
- Rest your thigh on the can and lift your heel off the bed. Straighten your knee as much as possible.
- Pause, and then lower heel.
- This exercise can also be done on your non-operative side.



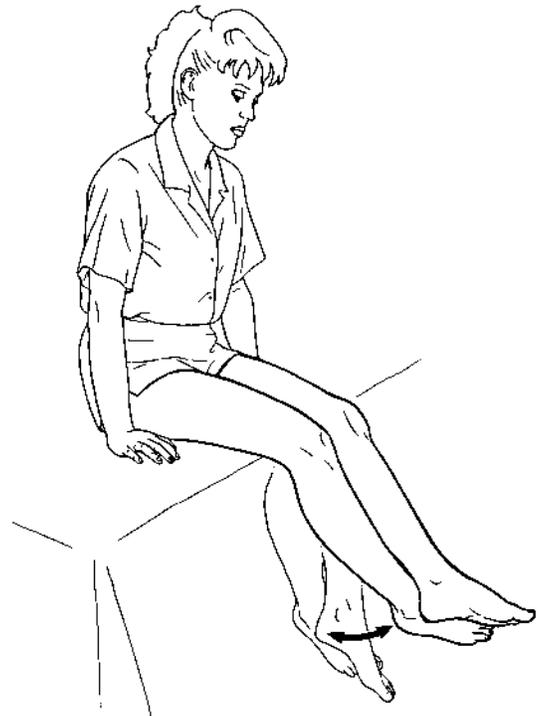
Quadriceps Setting and Stretching

- Place the 3 lb. coffee can or blanket roll under your heel and do a quadriceps set as described before.
- Push down at your knee and hold tight for a slow count of 5, then relax.



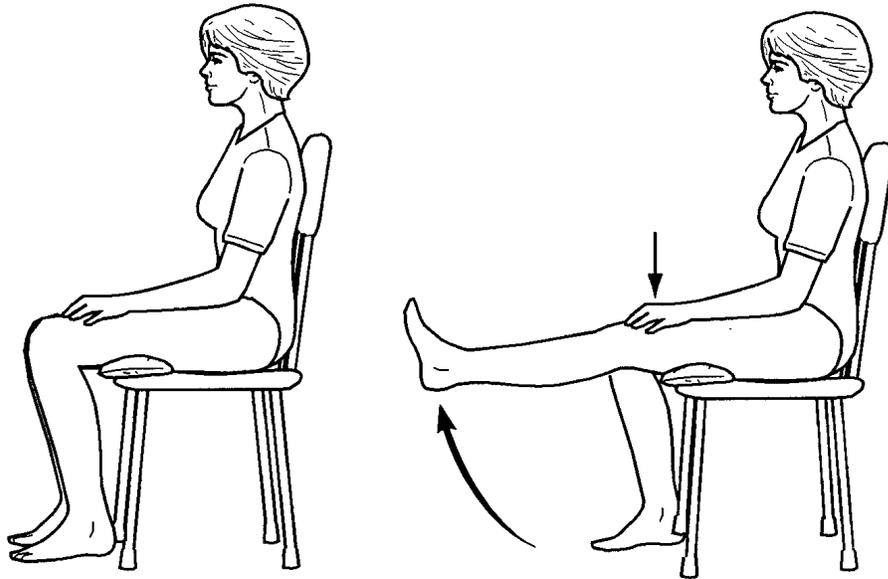
Warm Up

- Sit on a chair or the side of a bed.
- With your operated leg dangling or crossed over your good leg, gently move your operated leg up and down.



Knee Extension

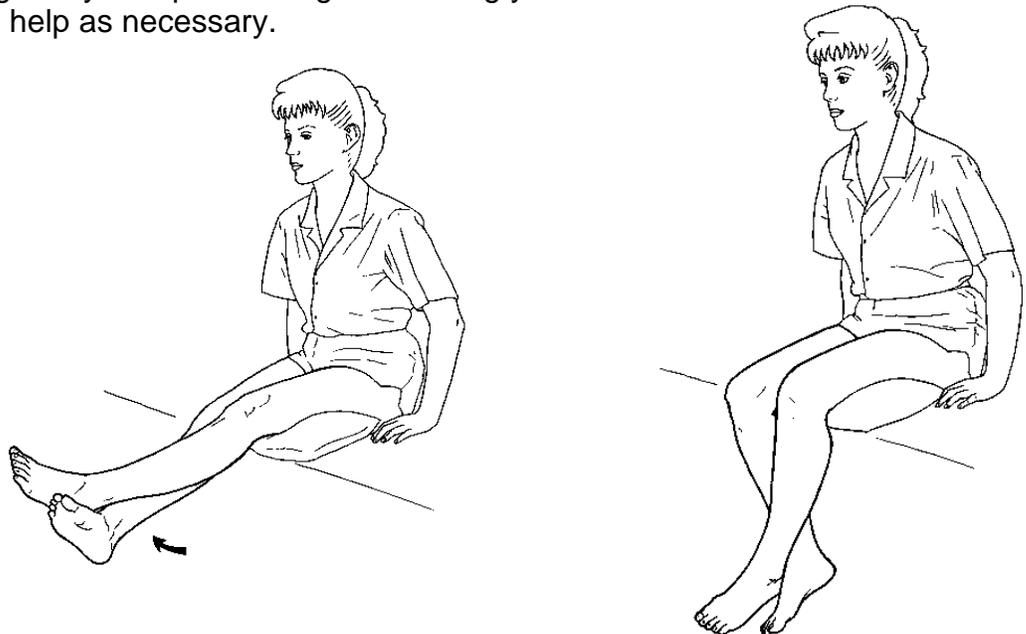
- Sit on a chair or the side of a bed.
- Place a hand on the thigh of your operated leg. While pressing down on your thigh, lift your heel and attempt to straighten your knee.
- Lower your heel.



Larrick's Exercises

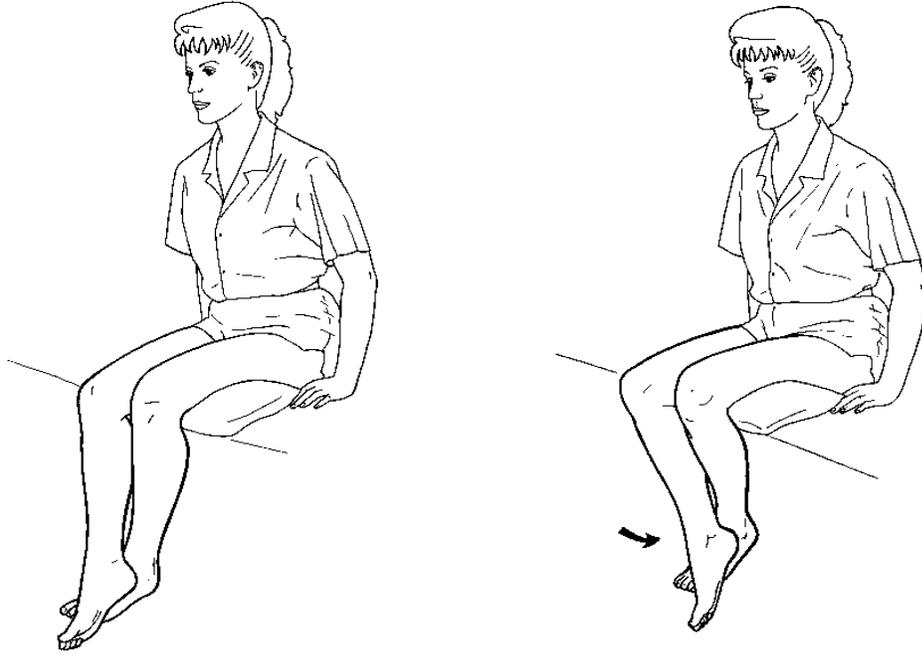
Extension

- Support your operated leg with your good leg by placing your foot under the heel.
- Try to straighten your operated leg while using your good leg to help as necessary.

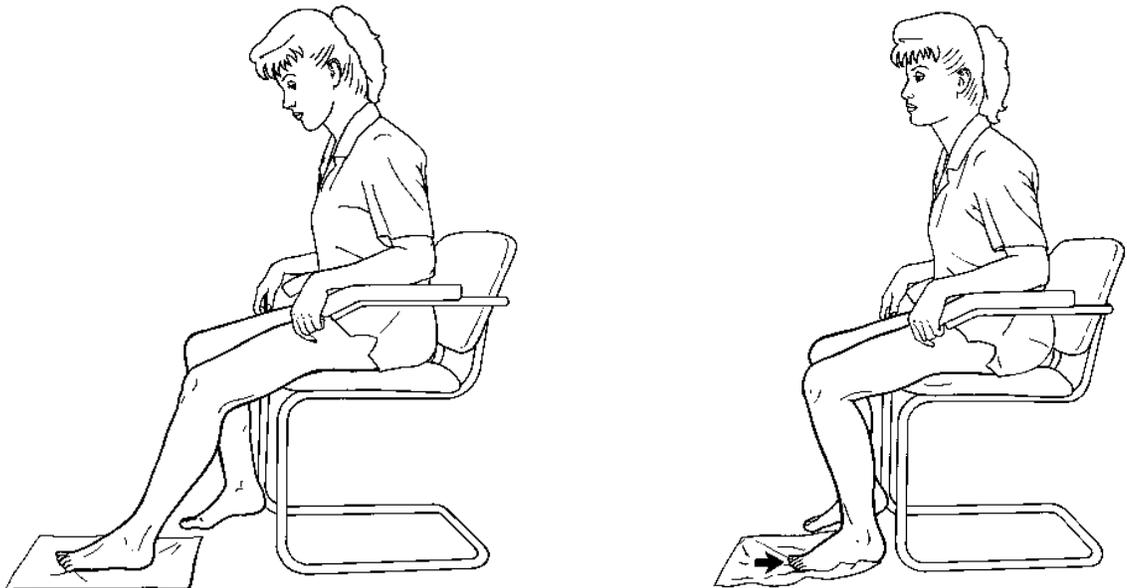


Flexion

- Cross your good leg over your operated leg at the ankle.
- Try to bend (flex) your operated knee while helping with your good leg.

**Foot Slide**

- Sit in chair and place your foot of the operated leg on a plastic bag.
- Slide your foot back and forth on the plastic, bending your knee as much as your can.
- Continue this exercise for 5 minutes.

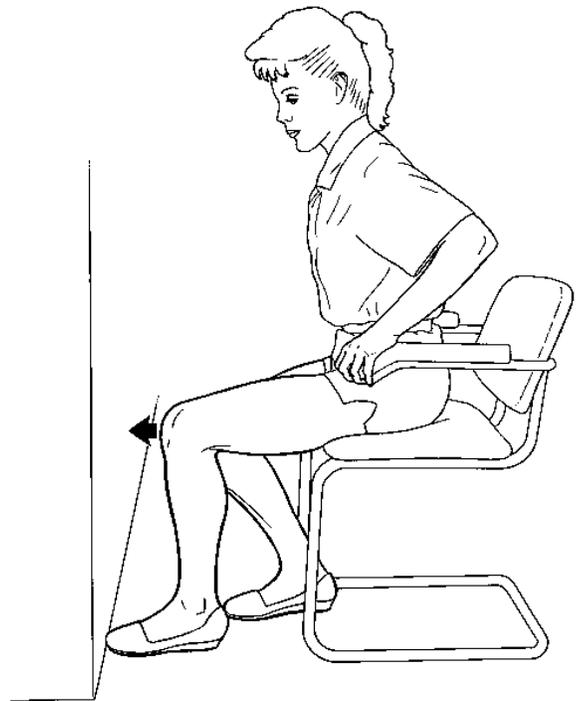


Sitting

- Sit on a chair or the edge of a bed and stabilize your foot against some type of support such as the wall.

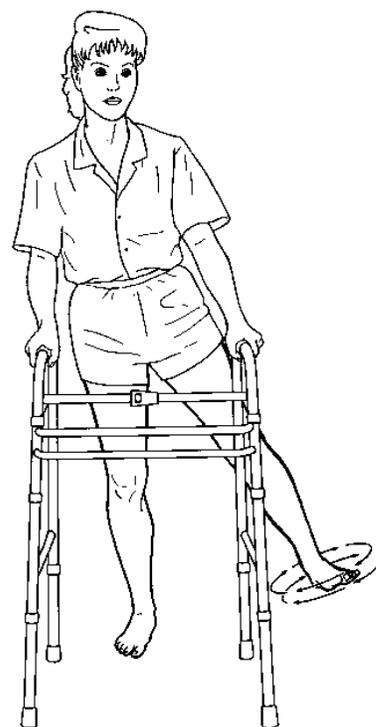
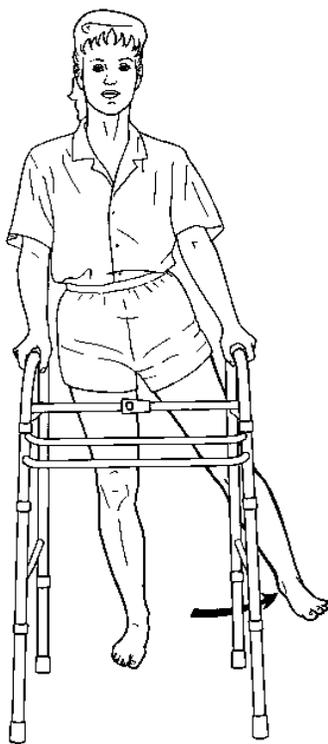
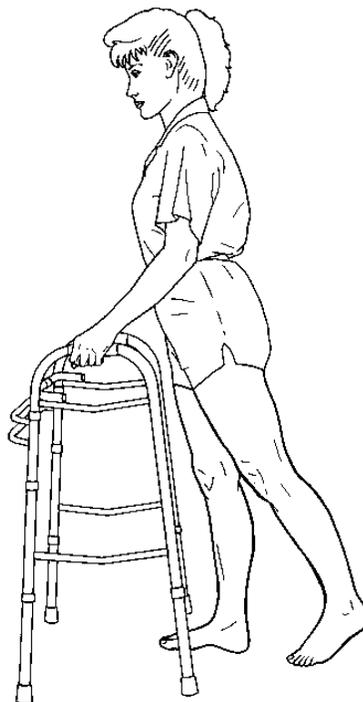
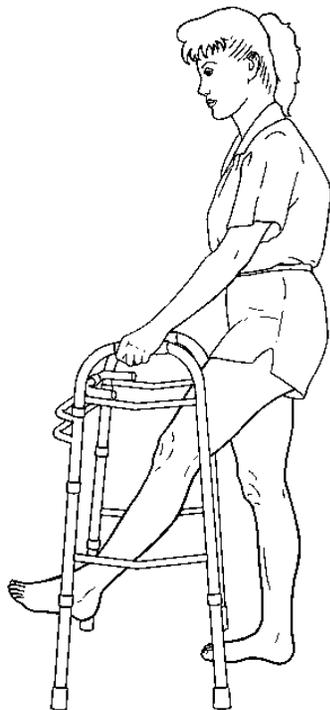


- Press down with your arms and gently slide forward toward your feet and then back.



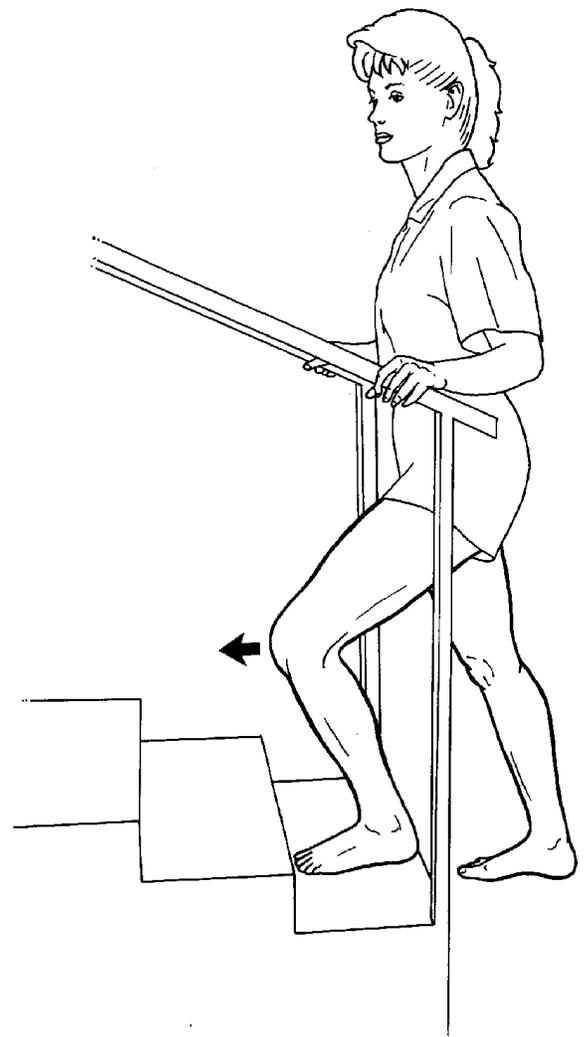
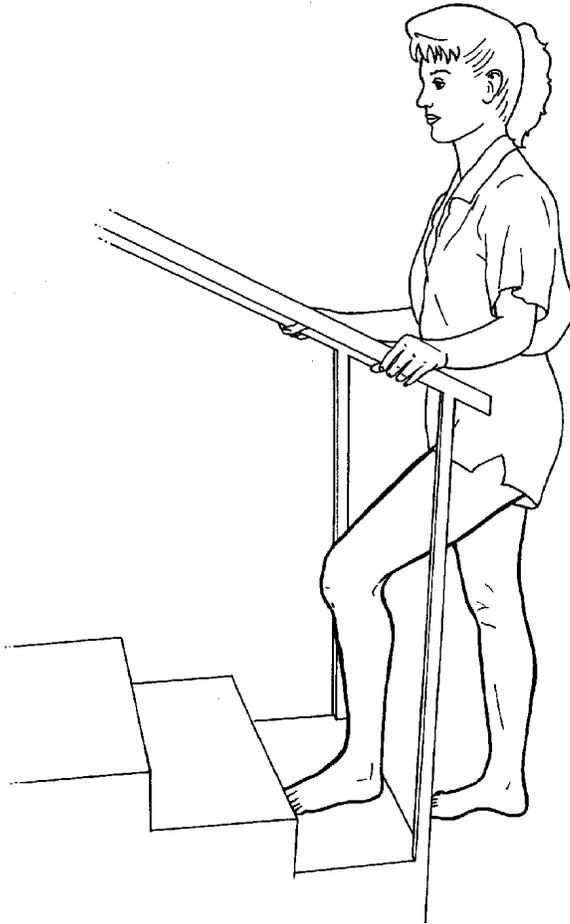
Standing

- While standing, use your walker to support yourself on either side.
- Keep your back and body straight and lift your operated leg forward, backward and then to the side.
- Move your operated leg in a circular motion.



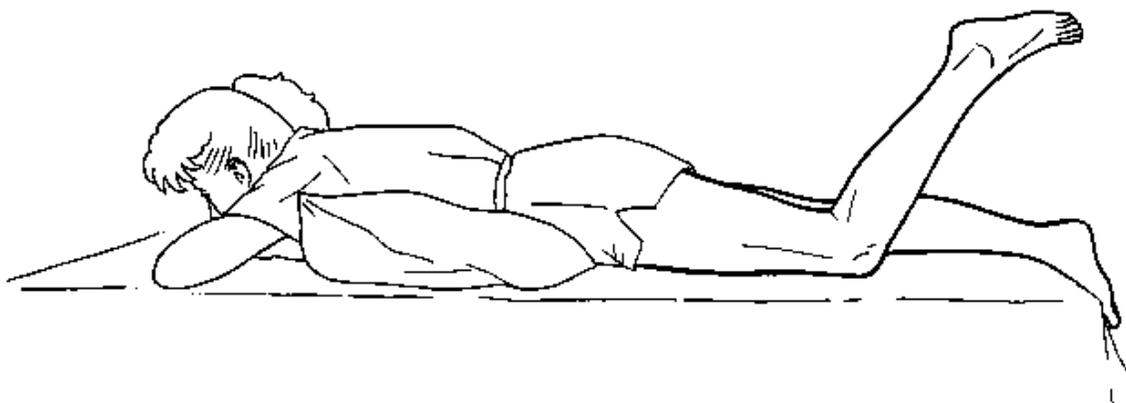
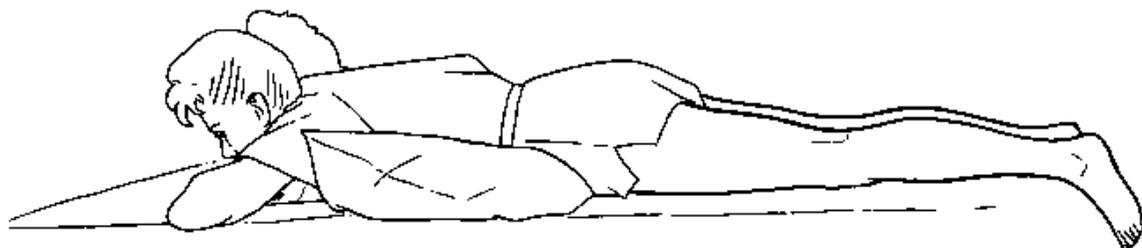
Stair Stepping

- Stand at the bottom of flight of stairs and hold on to either railing.
- Place the foot of your operated leg on the first step.
- Rock gently over your foot, allowing your knee to bend. Bending your good knee as you rock will make flexion easier.



Knee Flexion

- Lie on your stomach on a flat surface. With your thigh resting on the surface, bend your operated knee back as far as you can.



Hip Extension

- Lie on your stomach on a flat surface.
- Keeping your knee straight, lift your operated leg off the surface.

