



POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER LIGAMENT/TENDON RECONSTRUCTION

1. **ELEVATE** your leg as much as possible for the first 48 hours. This will help reduce the swelling. Your foot should be elevated above your knee, which should be elevated above your hip level. *An elevated foot that is below the level of the knee will still swell.* Place two or three pillows under your heel (not knee) and recline so the foot/knee are above your heart level.
2. **EXERCISES:** Start when comfortable for fastest recovery **UNLESS OTHERWISE INSTRUCTED.**
 - **Quad sets:** Tighten thigh with pillow under heel and try to push knee downward using your quad muscle. Hold muscle contraction for 5 sec then relax. Repeat in sets of 20.
 - **Ankle Pumps:** Move ankle up and down--- this will help reduce swelling and prevent blood clots.
 - **Knee Motion:** Start trying to straighten your knee as much as possible (within your level of comfort) by placing a pillow under the heel and doing quad sets. Try to hold your knee straight for at least 10 seconds and perform 20--30 reps, 2 to 3 times/day. Especially helpful right when you wake up.
 - **CPM Machine:** You may have a continuous passive motion (CPM) machine to help you bend the knee. This will be easier to use if you start it immediately. Generally this is used for 1 week only to help keep your knee from getting stiff. Try and use it for 8 hours total per day. Many patients will sleep in the machine so they don't feel stiff in the morning. Make sure it is set from 0-90 **degrees immediately** unless otherwise instructed. This helps speed up recovery so that when you start PT, they can focus on things other than early motion. **DO NOT USE BRACE WHEN IN THE MACHINE**
3. **ICE:** Apply ice, either a plastic bag of crushed ice or an ice compression device (Cold therapy unit, which is optional but convenient), for 20 minutes every hour or 2 for the first 3-4 days. Thereafter, you should ice during the day as needed and at the end of the day or after activity. This should be done for 3-4 weeks after surgery. **DO NOT USE ANY COLD THERAPY LONGER THAN 20 MINUTES EACH HOUR AS COLD INJURY CAN OCCUR. ALWAYS CHECK FOR RED SKIN OR FROSTBITE.**
4. **CRUTCHES:** Your weight bearing status is dependent on what was done at surgery. Please See below

- NONWEIGHTBEARING:** Do not put any weight on the operated side. Use your crutches at all times.
- PARTIAL WEIGHTBEARING:** You may put your foot down for balance only but not all of your weight
- FULL WEIGHTBEARING:** You may put all of your weight on the operated side when you feel comfortable. Use your crutches only if you need them for balance or pain relief.

5. **BRACE:** You may have a brace with hinges. The hinges are adjustable and I will set them in surgery. **DO NOT CHANGE THE SETTINGS UNLESS INSTRUCTED.** Generally, I would like you to wear the brace at all times when up on your feet. This will protect the knee against sudden hyperflexion or hyperextension, which could damage any repair. You do not need to wear it while in the CPM, if you have one. **Wear it at night, if not in the CPM, and LOCK the brace in full extension (straight) to prevent your knee from becoming stiff overnight.** In the morning, you can then unlock it, hang your leg over the edge of the bed and actively bend and straighten your knee. In addition, just sitting and dangling the leg will improve flexion in the morning.
6. **DRESSING:** Leave your surgical bandage on until your postop visit unless otherwise instructed. This protects the incisions from any accidental injury and infection. NEVER remove the steri-strips or pull/cut any sutures, if present. **KEEP THE INCISIONS DRY UNTIL YOU SEE ME IN THE OFFICE. Contact us if you have problems with the dressing for any reason.**
7. **SHOWER:** Keep the entire bandage clean and dry at all times. Do not immerse in water even if covered with a plastic bag. You may shower with a plastic bag (small waste basket bag works well) sealed at top and bottom with tape or **GLAD Press n Seal**. The safest thing to do is sponge bathe for a few days.
8. **WORK:** Your work status will be discussed preop and at your first post-op visit. Plan to take at least 1 week off if possible. If you have a sedentary job, it may be possible to go back to work earlier but wait and see how you feel.
9. **DRIVING:** You may drive when you can react to an emergency situation. This will take longer if you had surgery on your right knee. It requires you to be able to brake quickly and be off of pain medication. We do not recommend driving while taking narcotic pain medicine.
10. **MEDICATIONS:** You will be discharged with several medications. Please see drug information sheet.
11. **PHYSICAL THERAPY:** I will give you a prescription for physical therapy at your first postop visit. Therapy is very important for your recovery, even if you do some of the exercises on your own after demonstration by the therapist. I only use the highest quality therapists.
12. **PROBLEMS:** If you experience any problems or have any concerns, please call my office during regular business hours at **480-264-6995** or **Samantha at 480-264-6968**. **After normal hours, the best way to reach me is by emailing me at dsb@azisks.com** as I check this very frequently. You may also reach us by calling the office and the phone call will be forwarded.
13. **EMERGENCY** If you have an emergency go the nearest ER. Examples of an emergency include fever over 102 deg, dense numbness/tingling in the extremity *if a nerve block wasn't given*, shortness of breath, worsening and severe pain not relieved by the pain medicine or excessive bleeding.
 - > **IF you have any of the following risk factors for blood clots AND are having surgery on your lower limb (thigh, knee, leg, ankle), you WILL need to take one regular aspirin daily for 4 weeks after surgery: PLEASE let us know if you can not tolerate aspirin.**
 - (1) Age over 40 (female), 50 (male)
 - (2) Birth control pills (any age female)
 - (3) Smoker or tobacco user on a regular basis
 - (4) Previous major surgery on the same limb
 - (5) Relatively inactive lifestyle
 - (6) Significantly overweight
 - (7) Family member with history of blood clots

- **Signs of possible DVT (deep vein thrombosis) or PE (pulmonary embolism)**
 - **Severe calf pain**
 - **Excessive swelling of any extremity**
 - **Shortness of breath**
 - **Newly dilated veins (unusual for you)**
 - **Skin tightness or extreme pain to the touch**

CALL US IMMEDIATELY at 480-264-6995 OR SAMANTHA at 480-264-6968 IF ANY OF THE ABOVE SYMPTOMS DEVELOP OR GO TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM!

14. **FOLLOW-UP:** You will be scheduled for your post-operative follow up at the time your surgery is scheduled. We will do everything we can to accommodate you at your preferred office. The first visit should be no later than 14 days after surgery, and preferably 5-10 days. Please be sure to call and confirm the date/time within a few days after your appointment.

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