

Name of Child: _____ Date: _____

Post-Op ACL instructions for Early Motion and Basic Movement Retraining

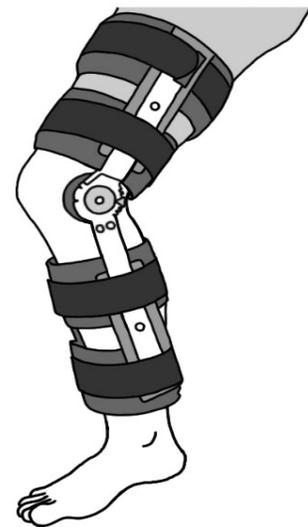
An anterior cruciate ligament (**ACL**) is a band of tissue (**ligament**) that connects the thigh bone (**femur**) to the shin bone (**tibia**) at the knee. It helps keep the knee from moving too far forward or too far back.

An ACL tear is an injury to the knee, usually from an injury or accident. When this happens, there is usually a loud “popping” sound or a snapping sound. It can be very painful and swelling (**inflammation**) usually starts right away.

Your child had surgery to reconstruct the ACL. Your child will need physical therapy after surgery. This will help your child gain strength and movement back in the knee. Your child's orthopedic surgeon and physical therapist will develop a physical therapy program for your child to do at home.

During the first few weeks after surgery, your child's therapist will help your child get movement back in the knee. These exercises will help decrease inflammation and increase blood flow to the knee. They will also help keep the muscles from getting weak and stiff from not using them.

Your child will need to wear a hinged knee brace. This brace will limit your child's knee movement. Your child's medical team will show you how to correctly put the brace on your child and how to use it safely. Your child will need to wear the brace at all times except for showering. You will need to lock it in **full extension** (straight out) when your child is using crutches and when your child is sleeping.



Your child will need to wear a hinged knee brace.

During exercises, the brace will need to be locked at a specific degree in order to limit your child's movement at the knee.

Your child will need to do the following exercises until your child sees a physical therapist at around two weeks after surgery.

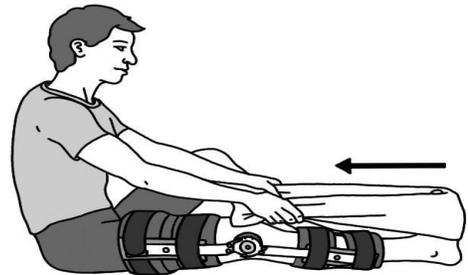
Exercises:

During your child's exercises, put the brace in _____ degrees.

Calf (gastroc) muscle stretch:

Complete 3 repetitions, 2 times each day:

- In a sitting position, hook a towel under your foot and pull your ankle back towards you until you feel a stretch in your calf. Keep your knee straight during the stretch.
- Hold the stretch for at least 30 seconds.

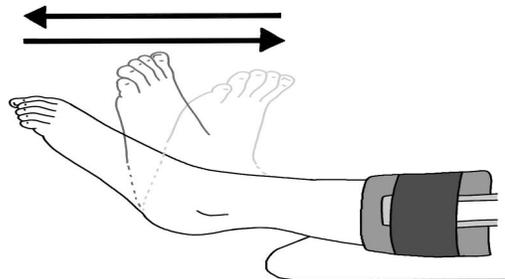


Calf muscle stretch.

Ankle pumps:

Complete 30 repetitions, 3 times each day:

- Point your toes down as if stepping on a gas pedal and then pull toes up towards you.

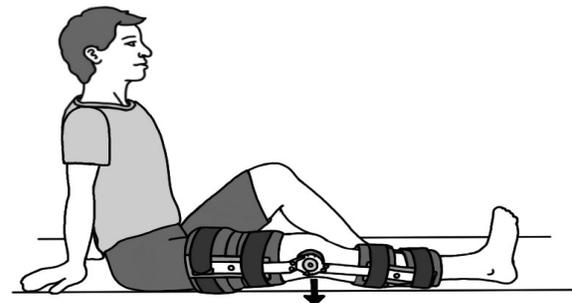


Ankle pumps.

Thigh muscle exercise (quadriceps):

Complete 2 sets of 10 repetitions, 2 times each day:

- With your knee as straight as possible, tighten your thigh muscles (**quadriceps**) without lifting your leg. Think about pushing your knee down into the table to tighten your thigh muscles.
- Hold each repetition for 5-10 seconds.

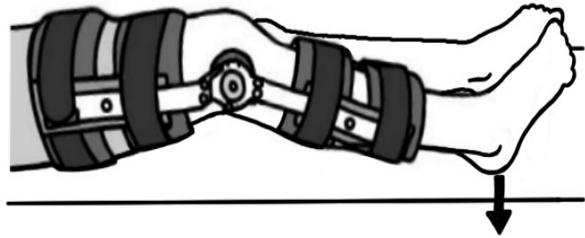


Thigh muscle exercise.

Back of thigh muscle exercise (hamstring):

Complete 3 sets of 10 repetitions, 2 times each day:

- Lay on your back with your knee slightly bent. Gently push your heel into the floor and hold for 5-10 seconds.

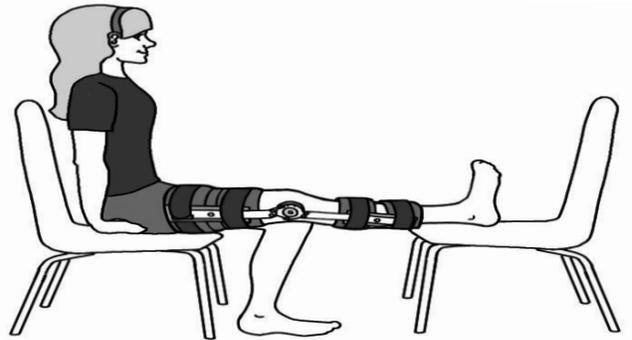


Back of thigh muscle exercise.

Heel prop knee extension stretch:

Complete 2 times per day for 5 minutes:

- While seated, prop your foot up on another chair and allow gravity to stretch your knee towards a more straightened position (**extension**).
- Hold this position for 5 minutes.

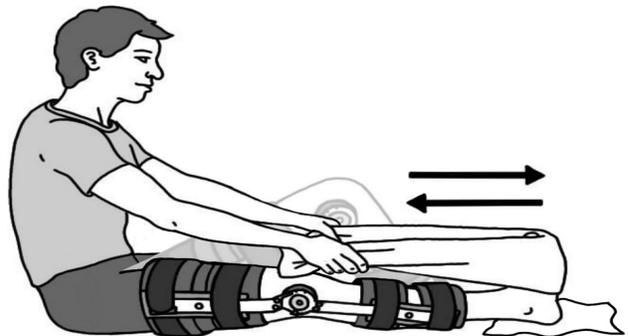


Heel prop knee extension stretch.

Heel slides:

Complete 10 repetitions, 2 times each day:

- In a sitting position, place a towel or belt around your foot on the side where the knee surgery was and a towel under your heel. Slide your foot backward towards your bottom using your arms to help bend your knee.
- When you are bending your knee the most you can (**maximal knee flexion**), hold that position for 5 -10 seconds and then return to the starting position.

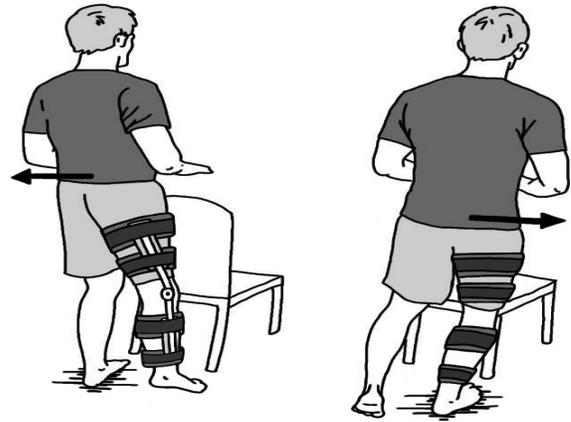


Heel slides.

Weight shifts:

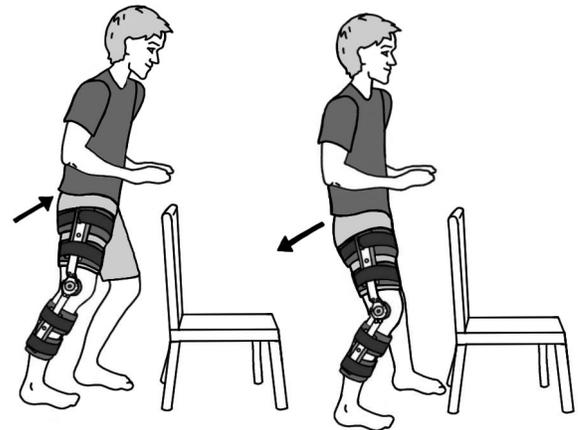
Complete 2 sets of 10, 2 times each day:

- While standing with both knees slightly bent, slowly shift your body weight side-to-side as much as possible without pain. Pause for 5 seconds when your weight is on your affected side before shifting back.



Weight shift side-to-side.

- Repeat shifting your body weight front and back with your feet in a staggered stance. Pause for 5 seconds when your weight is on your affected side before shifting back.



Weight shift front and back.

Now that you've read this:

- Show your nurse or doctor how you will help your child do these exercises. (Check when done.)
- Tell your nurse or doctor who you will call if you have questions or concerns. (Check when done.)



If you have any questions or concerns,
 call your child's doctor or call _____

If you want to know more about child health and illness,
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016
602-933-1400
866-933-6459
www.phoenixchildrens.org
Facebook: [facebook.com/theemilycenter](https://www.facebook.com/theemilycenter)
Twitter: @emilycenter

Disclaimer

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

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#1685 • Written by Nicki Mitchell, MSN, RN, CPN
Illustrated by Dennis Swain, Christine Remmel
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Name of Health Care Provider: _____

Date returned: _____ db

Family Review of Handout

Health care providers: Please teach families with this handout.

Families: Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read? Yes No

easy to read? Yes No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read? Yes No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading
this handout? Yes No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any
questions about the subject? Yes No

If yes, what?

Is there anything you don't like about the drawings?

Yes

No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

The Emily Center
Health Education Specialist
Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016-7710

602-933-1395

Thank you for helping us!