

Knee exercises

0 – 6 weeks



First 6 weeks after removal of a cast

Your leg was injured and you had to be in a cast/splint for a while to allow it to heal. During this time your knee becomes stiff and your muscles become tight and weak. Your orthopaedic doctor is satisfied that the injury has healed. It is now important to get back the movement and strength in the leg and get you doing what you want and need to do.

Skin and swelling

You will notice your skin may look strange where the cast was in place. It is normal to have skin and hair that gathered under the cast. If you had surgery, you will see a scar that should be well on its way to being fully healed. Wash the skin with warm, soapy water and apply moisturising cream if the skin is very dry. The skin will gradually return to normal. Contact your physiotherapist, orthopaedic doctor or local doctor if you have any concerns about your scar.

There is usually still some swelling in the leg after the cast has come off. To help reduce this swelling you may want to wear a compression bandage and elevate your leg during the day. It should continue to improve with time and exercise.

Walking

Walking may be difficult at first, but it will get easier with practice. Start with small walks and as you are able to, go for longer walks. When walking it is important to land down on your heel and push off from your toes. This helps to restore normal movement and strength. Also, try and tighten the muscle at the front of the thigh to straighten the knee as you land on the heel.

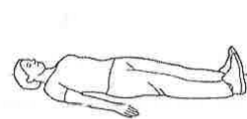
Exercises

The following exercises are to help you get back to normal. It is recommended that you do these exercises 3 times a day. It is normal to feel some stretching or pressure in the knee and even some mild pains during the exercise, but these should ease off with stopping the movement. If you are feeling strong pain, stop doing the exercises. Call your physiotherapist or orthopaedic doctor to discuss.



Lie on your back. Bend and straighten your knee.

Repeat 10 times. Start with 1 set and try to build up to 3 sets.



Lie on your back with your legs straight. Bend your ankles backwards and push your knees down hard against the bed or floor. Hold for 5 seconds then relax. Repeat 10 times.

Start with 1 set and try to build up to 3 sets.



Lie on your back. Place a cushion or a rolled-up towel under the knee. Pull your foot and toes towards the knee, tighten your thigh muscles and straighten the knee so that your heel lifts off the surface. Note - keep knee on the cushion.

Hold for 5 seconds then relax. Repeat 10 times. Start with 1 set and try to build up to 3 sets. To make the exercise harder place a small weight around your ankle.



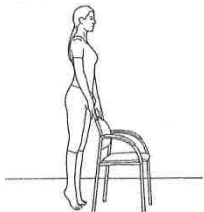
Sit on a chair with your leg out in front of you and off the floor. Pull your toes backward, tighten your thigh muscles and straighten your knee. Hold for 5 seconds, and slowly relax your leg. Lower your leg to the floor and try and bend it as far as possible. Hold for 5 seconds.

Repeat 10 times. Start with 1 set and try to build up to 3 sets.



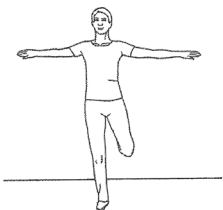
Stand behind a chair or at the kitchen bench and support yourself with both hands. Slowly bend your hips and knees to move into a squat position. Go as far as is comfortable.

Repeat 10 times. Start with 1 set and try to build up to 3 sets (when you are able).



Stand behind a chair or kitchen bench and support yourself with both hands. Push up on your toes, as far as you can and slowly lower back down.

Repeat 10 times. Start with 1 set and try to build up to 3 sets (when you are able).



Stand close to a solid support such as a rail, table or kitchen bench. Stand on your affected leg, with the knee straight and try to maintain your balance for 20 seconds. Repeat this 3 times.

When confident, practice this exercise with your eyes closed.

To progress further, practice on a soft surface e.g. a folded towel or in the sand.



Stand with the leg to be stretched on a foot stool or chair. Pull your ankle back towards you and try to straighten your knee. Then lean your body forward. You should feel the stretching behind your knee and thigh.

Hold 30 seconds then relax. Repeat 3 times.

If this is easy then try holding for longer, up to a minute.



Position your body facing the wall or chair with your affected foot behind. Keep your heel down. Then lean towards the wall until you feel a stretch in your calf or back of your ankle.

Hold this position for 30 seconds and repeat 3 times.

If this is easy then try holding for longer, up to a minute.

For any questions contact Physiotherapy Departments on the following phone numbers:

Gosford	4320 3314	Woy Woy	4344 8446
Wyong	4394 8217	Long Jetty	4336 7752

This brochure contains general information for patients being treated at Central Coast Local Health District. It is not a substitute for more detailed information from the Orthopaedic and Physiotherapy Department (OPD). If any exercise causes more than mild discomfort, stop and seek advice from the OPD.