



# Knee injury and exercises: aftercare advice

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## Information for patients from the Emergency Department

**Please speak to a healthcare professional before following the advice below**

You have injured your knee ligaments, muscles, or tendons (sprains / strains). This may cause pain, swelling, stiffness, and a limp which should settle over a couple of weeks.

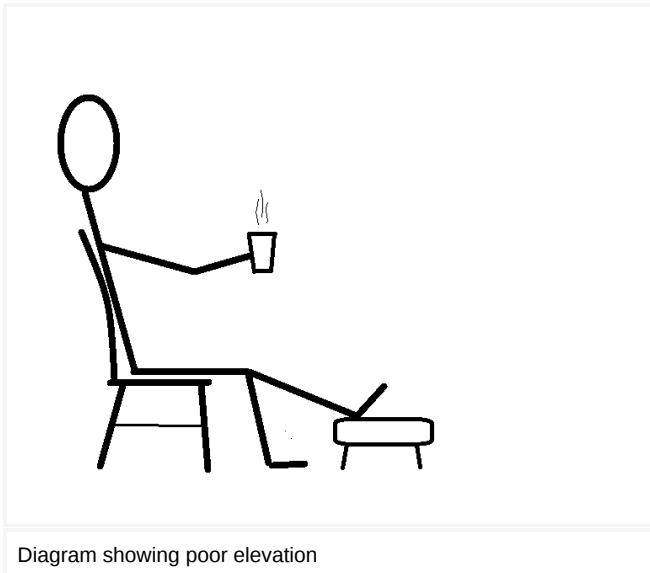
### How do I look after my injury?

- You can **use ice (or a cold flannel)** to ease the pain, by wrapping crushed ice in a damp towel and placing it over your injury. Leave the ice in place for 10 to 15 minutes, then remove. Do this every two to four hours during the day, for two to three days.

**Caution:** ice can cause burns, so do not put it directly on your skin, always use a towel. Protect sensitive skin with baby oil.

Contrast baths are also very helpful in reducing the swelling and discomfort. For more information, ask a member of staff for the Trust's **Contrast bathing and exercises** leaflet.

- Raise (elevate) your injured leg to reduce swelling, keeping your foot well up above the level of your hip and resting your leg on a pillow when you go to bed. Continue to do this for 48 hours or until the pain and swelling settles.



- You should take the recommended painkillers regularly to relieve your discomfort.
- Once most of the swelling has gone down, exercise your knee gently four to six times a day (see exercises below). If the movements hurt, try to make the exercises smaller.
- You should not wear any support bandage in bed or stand still for long periods of time.
- We may have given you a stick / crutches to help you walk. Please return your used walking aids to your nearest Emergency Department or Urgent Treatment Centre when you no longer need them. This will help others.

### Knee exercises

A weight can be added if these exercises are too easy, but make sure the weight is not too heavy and allows you to do the full range of movements.

#### Exercise 1

Repeat this exercise regularly throughout the day. It is the most important exercise out of the following, as it provides your joint with stability.

- Brace your knee and pull your foot towards you. Hold for five seconds, then relax.
- Repeat this exercise 10 times.
- Rest for three minutes and then move on to exercise 2.



Exercise 1



Exercise 2

### Exercise 2

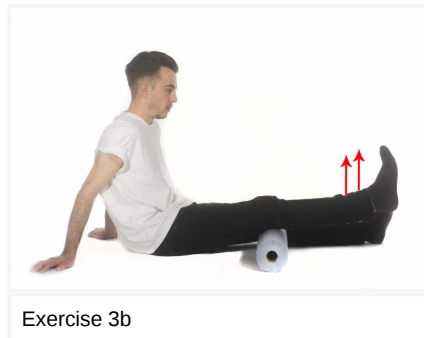
- Lift your leg straight off the bed without bending your knee; making sure that your other leg is bent.
- Hold for five seconds, then relax.
- Repeat this exercise 10 times.
- Rest for three minutes and then move on to exercise 3.

### Exercise 3

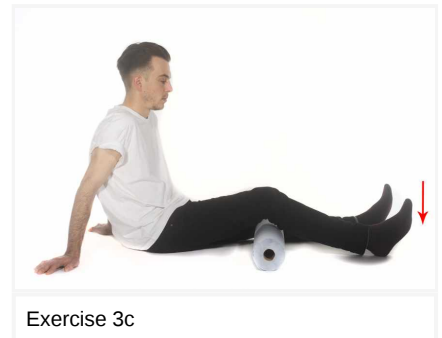
- Sit on a firm, flat surface (such as the floor) with your hands behind you for support.
- Place a rolled towel or a two litre bottle (such as water or coke) under your knee (exercise 3a). Bend your knee about six inches, then raise your foot until your knee is straight (exercise 3b).
- Hold for five seconds, then relax (exercise 3c).
- Repeat this exercise 10 times.



Exercise 3a



Exercise 3b



Exercise 3c

### Avoid the following for the first three days after your injury

- **H**eat, such as hot water bottles and heat pads.
- **A**lcohol, as this will increase bleeding and swelling.
- **R**unning or any exercise.
- **M**assage, as this may increase bleeding and swelling.

If your pain increases or swelling gets worse, go to your GP for advice immediately.

**This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.**

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments** please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 783145 (tel://+441227783145), or email [ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net) ([ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net))

**Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals website (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/information-for-patients/patient-information/>).

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