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Soft tissue injury of the knee

Information for patients and carers

**Accident and Emergency Department
and Physiotherapy Department
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary**

What is a soft tissue injury of the knee?

The knee joint is surrounded by ligaments, muscles, tendons and cartilage. Ligaments are bands that hold the joint tight and the muscles and tendons help to move the joint. You will have overstretched one or more of these tissues when you injured your knee. This can lead to swelling, bruising and pain.

How can I treat myself?

For the first 48 hours after your injury the following should help:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Protection | This is provided by the Tubigrip® or splint we applied to your knee. Take this off after 3 to 5 days when your pain allows. Not all injuries require this; your nurse or doctor will have decided if you needed a Tubigrip® or splint when you were first assessed. |
| Rest | Don't push the movements or your activity levels. |
| Ice | Wrap a bag of frozen peas or crushed ice in a wet towel. Place over your knee on the part that is the most painful. Do this for 5 minutes, 2 or 3 times a day. Carry on with this until the pain and swelling go away. |

Compression Your Tubigrip®/splint will provide this.

Elevation Keeping your knee raised above the level of your heart can help to reduce any swelling.

Remember to take pain relief as prescribed in Accident and Emergency or your GP to reduce your pain.

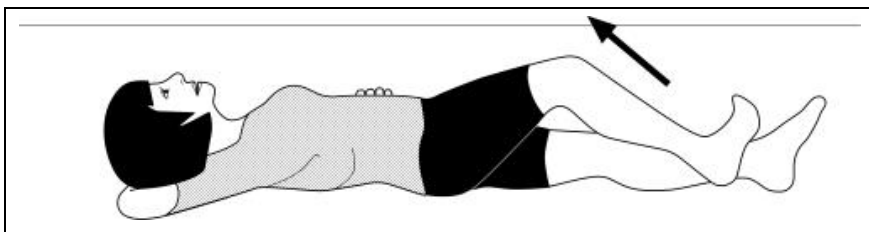
When can I put weight through my knee?

You should try to start taking weight through your leg as soon as possible to try to walk normally. Stop using walking aids such as a stick or crutches as soon as you can.

When can I start exercising?

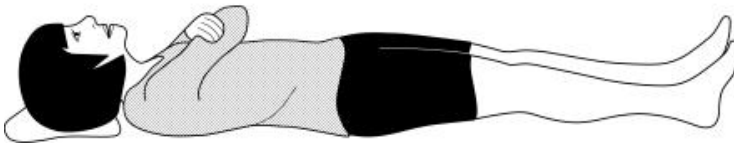
After 48 hours.

Here are a few exercises to start 48 hours after you injured your knee. This will allow you to regain your movement and muscle strength.



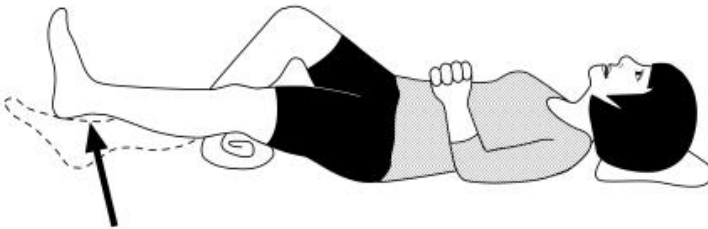
Exercise 1

Lying on your back, bend and straighten your knee.
Repeat 10 times.



Exercise 2

Lie on your back. Push the back of your knee down into the surface you are lying on. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat 10 times.



Exercise 3

Lie on your back with a rolled up towel under your knee. Keeping the back of your knee on the towel, pull your toes upward and lift the lower part of your leg up off the surface you are lying on and try to straighten your knee as much as possible. Hold for 10 seconds, slowly lower and repeat 10 times.



Exercise 4

Sitting on a chair/edge of a bed, lift and straighten the knee. Hold for 10 seconds, slowly lower and repeat 10 times.

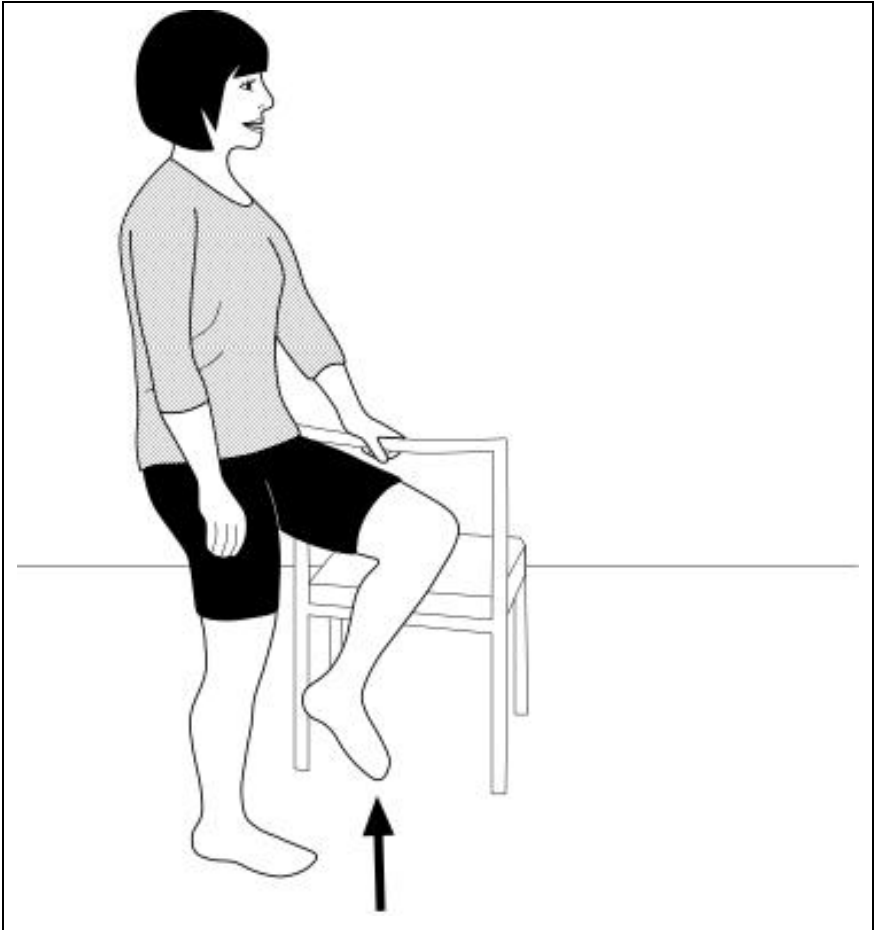
Within a week of your injury

You can move on to the following exercises within a week of your injury. Gradually increase your activity levels.



Exercise 5

Standing holding on to the back of a chair, with your feet flat on the floor bend your knees until they are over your toes and then return to a standing position. Repeat 10 times.



Exercise 6

With support ready, try standing on your affected leg only. Try to increase the length of time you can maintain this for. Repeat 3 times.



Exercise 7

Holding on to the back of a chair, keeping both knees together, lift the heel of your affected leg up as far towards your bottom as possible by bending your knee. Hold for 10 seconds and slowly straighten your leg again.

Two weeks after your injury

Stretches:

You should start stretching exercises around 2 weeks after your injury as pain allows.



Exercise 8

With your affected leg out in front of you and with your heel on a step, straighten out your knee, stick your bottom out and pull your toes up towards you until you feel a stretch at the back of your leg. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.



Exercise 9

Standing holding on to a chair for support, keeping the knees together, use your hand around your ankle to bring your heel to your bottom until you feel a stretch on the front of your thigh. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

When can I get back to my normal exercises?

Take things fairly easy at first. Try walking, swimming and cycling, which are all low impact. When swimming, it may be better to avoid breast stroke at first if you have pain on the inside of your knee but you could introduce this stroke as you feel able.

Start with small amounts of exercise and gradually build up as pain allows, to the activities you did before, such as running and football.

Remember, push UP to pain but not INTO it
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The pain and swelling should gradually settle. If the problem gets worse and this advice is not helping, seek advice from your GP or the Accident and Emergency Department.

Contact telephone number

**Accident and Emergency
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary
 (01224) 553306 **

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