

# Emergency Department

## Self Treatment of Knee Injuries



In the early stages after injuring your knee, you may have some pain and swelling. This is expected and will improve with rest, elevation and gentle exercise.

### In the first few days:

- Elevate your leg to improve swelling.
- Ice may help to ease pain.
- Over the counter medication can be helpful. We recommend paracetamol as first line pain relief. **(Always check the label before use.)**
- Short term rest and using a walking aid may help reduce pain.
- Avoid any unnecessary treatment or investigations.

## Longer term management:

- An active approach including movement and exercise is beneficial. Try to walk as normally as possible. A walking aid may help. Try to strike the ground with your heel first, and push off with the toes.
- Return to normal activities as quickly as pain allows.
- Fear can cause a barrier to recovery. Being positive improves quality of life and can improve outcome!
- Cardiovascular exercise will improve blood flow to the injured area. This will improve function, improve the ability to work and reduce the need for pain medication. Try to continue regular exercise such as walking, swimming or cycling as you are able. When you are able to hop, you can begin gentle jogging!
- There is strong evidence supporting the use of exercises. This will help improve movement and strength which is commonly reduced after a knee injury

# Exercises:

## Exercise 1



Bend your knee as far as you're able, then straighten until you feel the bed behind your knee.

## Exercise 2



Roll a towel up and place under your knee. Straighten feeling muscles on the front of your thigh tense.

## Exercise 3



Keeping your leg straight, lift 20 – 30 cm off the bed.

## Exercise 4



Sitting on a chair. Straighten your knee and slowly lower back down.

## Exercise 5



When you are able, begin small squats in standing, progress these by bending lower as you are able.

Begin these exercises as soon as possible. It is important to maintain the movement and strength of your knee.

Repeat several times throughout the day and do as many as you are able.

It is common for soft tissue injuries to take 6 – 8 weeks to recover. If you feel you are not recovering and wish further advice contact the musculoskeletal helpline. The number is detailed on the back page of this booklet. This service can refer to physiotherapy if appropriate

# Useful Information and Contacts:



NHS Forth Valley website has lots of useful information and contacts:

[www.nhsforthvalley.com/health-services/know-who-to-turn-to-when-you-are-ill](http://www.nhsforthvalley.com/health-services/know-who-to-turn-to-when-you-are-ill)

GP contact details can be found at [www.nhsforthvalley.com/health-services/local-service-finder/](http://www.nhsforthvalley.com/health-services/local-service-finder/) or by calling NHS 24 on 111.

NHS Inform provides health information and details of services and support in your area. Call free on 0800 224488 or visit [www.nhsinform.co.uk](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk)



For people with mental health or psychological problems and in crisis, support is available by phoning NHS 24 on 111, Samaritans on 116 123 or Breathing Space on 0800 83 85 87.

The Musculoskeletal (MSK) Helpline is a service for people experiencing MSK disorders such as back pain or sports injuries. Phone **0800 917 9390** (9am to 5pm Mon to Fri). Calls are free.



**NHS 24**  
Call the free national NHS helpline on 111

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