

Knee replacement

Introduction

We know that you are currently experiencing a long wait for your knee replacement operation and that this can be very difficult.

We have developed this advice and information to help support you whilst you wait. It is designed to help you manage your symptoms and to help prevent these from getting worse. It also provides information about what you should do if your symptoms do worsen.

This guide has been written by the national experts in knee replacement and draws on the latest evidence and advice about how best to support people waiting for your procedure.

It includes links to advice and information which you can click on if using online, and details with regard helplines and other supportive websites.

You can also download and print this support guide and share with your family, friends and carers.

Waiting for your knee replacement

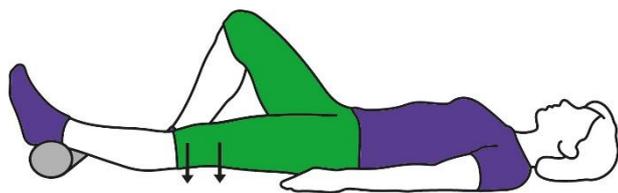
Our [pain management resource](#) includes advice to help you manage your ongoing pain. Prolonged waiting in pain can create [worries about money](#), [difficulties if you're a carer](#) and can impact your [mental health](#). Have a look at these links on this web platform for further advice and support if needed.

Versus Arthritis have produced useful information with regard to [living with arthritis](#) including changes you can make, and aids that you can use around the home that may help you better manage day to day tasks.

It is important to maintain movement and strength around your knee. You may have been given exercises to help previously and it is safe to continue these if you're able to. If not already doing so, the following [exercises](#) may help too. Start with those you find the easiest and then add a few more as you feel more confident. They may make your leg feel a bit tired and achy. If your pain and swelling increases, or keeps you awake and this lasts for a few days you may have done too much. If this

happens take a couple of days rest, and then as you feel better gradually start again.

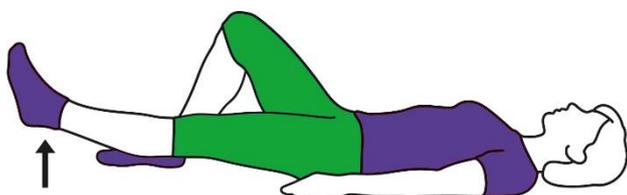
Muscle stretch



Lie down on your back with a rolled-up towel under the ankle of your leg. Bend the other leg at the knee. Use the muscles of your straight leg to push the back of your knee

firmly towards the bed or the floor. Hold for a slow count of five.

Repeat at least five times with each leg. This exercise helps to prevent your knee from becoming permanently bent. Try to do this at least once a day when lying down.



Straight-leg raise (lying)

You can do this on the floor or lying in bed. Bend one leg at the knee. Hold your other leg straight and lift your foot just off the floor or

bed. Hold for a slow count of five, then lower. Repeat five times with each leg every morning and evening.



Leg cross

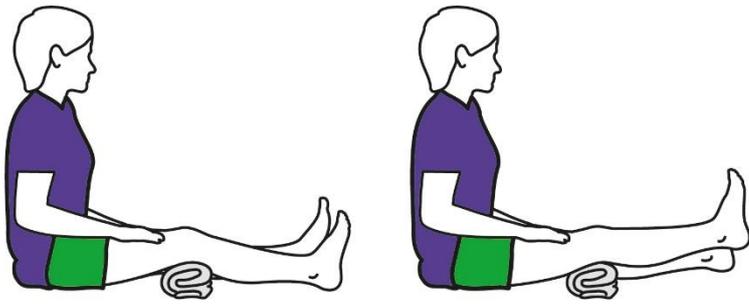
Sit on the edge of a table, seat or bed and cross your ankles. Push your front leg backwards and back leg forwards against each other until your thigh muscles become tense. Hold this for as long as you can, then relax. Rest for one minute and then repeat another two times. Switch legs and repeat.

Leg stretch



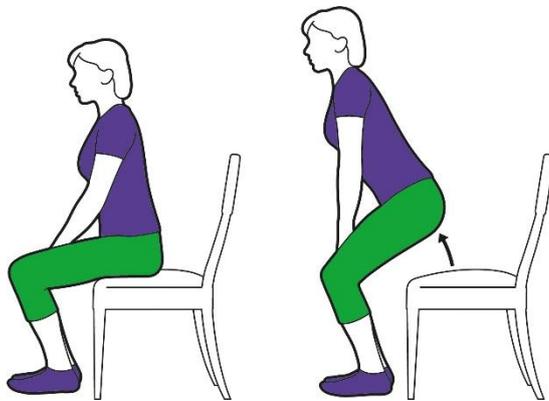
Sit on the floor with your legs stretched out straight in front of you. Slowly bend one knee up towards your chest, sliding your foot along the floor, until you feel a stretch. Hold for five seconds. Straighten your leg as far as you can and hold this position for five seconds. Repeat 10 times with each leg. If you can't get down onto the floor, sit on a sofa and use a board or tea tray as a surface to slide your foot along.

Quads exercise with roll



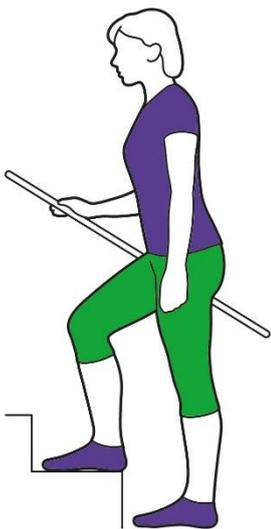
Sit on the floor, sofa or bed, with your legs stretched straight out in front of you. Put a rolled-up towel under one knee. Push down on the towel as if straightening your knee. Pull your toes and foot towards you, so that you feel your calf muscles stretch, and so

that your heel lifts off the floor. Hold for 5 seconds, then relax for 5 seconds. Do this 10 times, then repeat the exercise with the other leg.



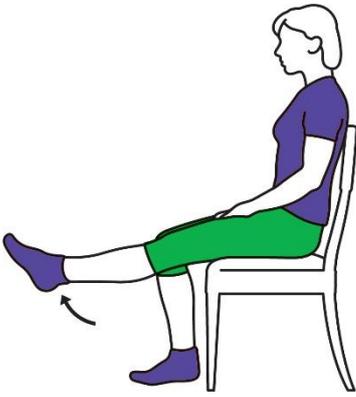
Sit/stands

Sit on a chair. Without using your hands for support, stand up and then sit back down. Make sure each movement is slow and controlled. Repeat until you can't do any more. Rest for one minute then repeat another two times. If the chair is too low, start with rising from a cushion on the seat and remove when you don't need it anymore.



Step ups

Step onto the bottom step of stairs with your right foot. Bring up your left foot, then step down with your right foot, followed by your left foot. Hold on to the bannister if necessary. Repeat with each leg until you can't do any more. Rest for one minute and then repeat this another two times. As you improve, use a higher step, or take two at a time.



Straight-leg raise (sitting)

Sit back in your chair, with a straight back. Straighten and raise one of your legs. Hold for a slow count to 10, then slowly lower your leg. Repeat 10 times with each leg.

Being active is important for your overall physical and mental wellbeing. Whilst you may be limited by your knee, there is still a lot you can do. Take frequent short walks as you're able to and try and get out and about planning regular rest stops. If using a walking stick, use it in the opposite hand to the painful leg. You may find using two sticks easier. As with the suggested exercises above, a sign that you have done too much is if your pain and swelling increases or keeps you awake and this lasts a few days. If this happens rest for a couple of days and then as you feel better gradually get going again.

The [Let's move with Leon](#) programme from Versus Arthritis is also worth a look. The 12-week programme consists of 30-minute movement sessions, offering a holistic, full-body programme that will improve strength, flexibility and cardiovascular fitness. You don't need any special gear, and there's no cost. Leon specialises in working with people with arthritis and related conditions.

Arthritis Action has developed a range of exercises you can [try in a chair in your own home](#). The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy's [Stronger My Way](#) hub also provides advice, reassurance and helpful videos to help you maintain general strength to help you carry out day to day activities.

Many people with arthritis often find it easier to be active in the water. [Good Boost](#) run [water-based exercise sessions](#) across the country and has experience supporting those with arthritis awaiting joint replacement operations

Find what works for you and it doesn't matter if you can't do some of the exercises because of your knee, any movement is good

Maintaining a balanced diet and a healthy weight can also help. The Versus Arthritis [eating well with arthritis](#) information is worth a look. The NHS [lose weight](#) resource also has lots of support available including a free 12 week weight loss plan.

[Quitting smoking](#) is one of the best things you can do for your general health, and it will also help you recover better from your operations, so can [drinking less](#) alcohol.

What should I do if my knee is getting worse?

If your pain gets worse

If you experience a significant increase in pain, swelling and/or decrease in walking distance which does not improve over a week please contact your GP practice.

If you notice greater deformity

If you feel your leg is becoming more bowed or knock kneed please contact your orthopaedic surgical team.

Where can I find additional information?

Some people find it useful to speak to others with arthritis and/or waiting for their operation. Both [Versus Arthritis](#) and [Arthritis Action](#) run local groups and offer a range of other support services.

[Versus Arthritis](#) also have a free Helpline (0800 5200 520) which can provide information and support on a wide range of topics related to arthritis; it is available from Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm.

Useful websites

Arthritis Action	www.arthritisaction.org.uk
NHS quitting smoking	www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/
NHS drink less	www.nhs.uk/better-health/drink-less/
NHS lose weight	www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight/
Good Boost	www.goodboost.ai
Versus Arthritis	www.versusarthritis.org