

**Division of Pediatric Orthopaedics**

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**ANTERIOR CRUCIATE LIGAMENT RECONSTRUCTION  
PRE-OPERATIVE PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM**

**ACL Prehab Goals**

- Control pain and swelling
- Restore normal range of motion
- Develop muscle strength sufficient for normal gait and ADLs

To help reduce swelling:

- Ice the knee for 20 minutes at least 3 times a day
- Elevate the knee often
- Take anti-inflammatory tablets (Ibuprofen or Aleve)
- Use a compression wrap.

To help regain full range of motion (ROM), preform the following exercises 1-3 times per day.

**Extension** can be obtained by doing the following exercises:

1) Passive knee extension:

- Sit in a chair and place your heel on the edge of a stool or chair.
- Relax the thigh muscles.
- Let the knee sag under its own weight until maximum extension is achieved.

2) Heel Props:

- Place the heel on a rolled towel or pillow making sure the heel is propped high enough to lift the thigh off the table.
- Allow the leg to relax into extension.
- 3 - 4 times a day for 10 - 15 minutes at a time.

3) Quad Sets:

- Sit on the floor with your injured leg straight out in front of you.
- Tighten the muscles on top of your thigh by pressing the back of your knee flat down to the floor.
- Hold for 10 seconds, rest 5-10 seconds. Repeat 10-30X.

- If you feel discomfort under your kneecap, try putting a small towel roll under your knee during this exercise.

4) Straight Leg Raises:

- Lie on your back with your good knee bent so that your foot rests flat on the floor. Your injured leg should be straight.
- Tighten the thigh muscles in the injured leg by pressing the back of your knee flat down to the floor. Hold your knee straight.
- Keeping the thigh muscles tight, lift your injured leg up so that your heel is about 12 inches off the floor. Hold for 5 seconds, then lower slowly. Repeat 10-30X.

**Flexion** (bending the knee) is obtained by doing the following exercises:

1) Passive knee bend:

- Sit on the edge of a table and let the knee bend under the influence of gravity.

2) Wall slides are used to further increase bending:

- Lie on the back with the involved foot on the wall and allow the foot to slide down the wall by bending the knee. Use other leg to apply pressure downward. Repeat 10-30X.

3) Heel slides are used to gain final degrees of flexion:

- Pull the heel toward the buttocks, flexing the knee. Hold for 5 seconds.
- Straighten the leg by sliding the heel downward and hold for 5 seconds. Repeat 10-30X.

\*\* These exercises should be performed 1-3 times a day prior to surgery and the days immediately following surgery. If there are any questions, please call the office to discuss.\*\*