

Before Your ACL Surgery

Prehab: get your knee ready

One of the best predictors of a good ACL recovery is going into surgery with a calm knee: little swelling, full straightening, and a working thigh muscle. The time before surgery is valuable. Use it.

- Goals before surgery: knee fully straight, bending well, little swelling, walking normally, and a straight leg raise with no droop.
- No cutting, pivoting, or jumping sports. One more giving-way episode can damage the meniscus or cartilage.
- Use your brace for walking if the knee feels unstable. Take it off for exercises.
- Ice 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off after exercise.

Pain guide: Mild discomfort up to 3 out of 10 is OK. If your knee is more swollen the next morning, do less next time.

YOUR PROGRAM Once or twice a day



Heel Prop (Straighten Your Knee)

Rest your heel on a rolled towel or pillow with nothing under your knee. Relax your thigh and let gravity straighten your knee.

Do: 5 to 10 minutes, 3 times a day

A straight knee comes first. Don't sleep with a pillow under your knee.



Straight Leg Raise

Bend your other knee. Tighten your thigh so your knee is locked straight, then lift your leg to the height of the other knee. Lower slowly.

Do: 10 reps x 2 sets, 2 times a day

If your knee bends as you lift, do thigh tighteners for a few more days first.



Seated Knee Bend

Sit with your foot on a towel on the floor. Slide your foot back under the chair as far as is comfortable. Hold 5 seconds, slide forward.

Do: 10 reps, 3 times a day



Mini Squat

Hold a counter, feet hip-width apart. Push your hips back and bend your knees a little, like starting to sit. Stand back up.

Do: 15 reps x 2 sets

Go only as low as is comfortable. Keep your knees over your toes.



Calf Raise

Hold a counter. Rise up onto your toes as high as you can, then lower slowly.

Do: 15 reps x 2 sets. Progress to one leg



Stationary Bike

Set the seat so your knee is slightly bent at the bottom. Pedal with light resistance. If you can't go all the way around, rock back and forth.

Do: 10 to 20 minutes, light resistance



Thigh Tightener (Quad Set)

Lie with your leg straight. Tighten the muscle on top of your thigh and press the back of your knee down. Hold 5 seconds, then relax.

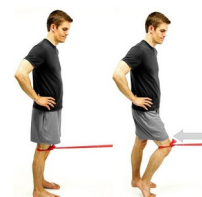
Do: 10 reps, 3 times a day



Heel Slide

Lie on your back. Slide your heel toward your buttock as far as is comfortable. Hold 5 seconds, then slide back out straight.

Do: 10 reps, 3 times a day



Band Knee Straightening

Loop a band behind your knee and anchor it in front. Start with your knee slightly bent, then push it back until fully straight. Hold 3 seconds.

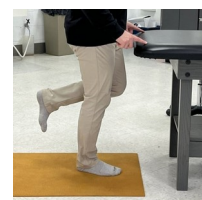
Do: 15 reps x 2 sets



Bridge

Lie on your back, knees bent, feet flat. Squeeze your buttocks and lift your hips until you are straight from shoulders to knees. Hold 3 seconds, lower slowly.

Do: 10 reps x 2 sets



Single-Leg Balance

Stand next to a counter and lift one foot. Balance as long as you can, touching the counter only if you need to.

Do: 30 seconds, 3 times each side

Harder: close your eyes or stand on a pillow.

This program is a guide. Stop any exercise that causes sharp pain and let us know. Questions? Call (425) 656-5060.