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Exercises For An Injured Knee

Exercising an injured knee properly will help your child return to sports sooner and more safely. The following exercises are designed to help regain full knee motion, strength, and balance. Make sure your child follows these directions carefully.

Range of Motion

1. Sit on the floor or the edge of a table.
2. Bend and straighten each leg 10 times, two to three times per day.
3. Stop this exercise when you can bend and straighten the injured knee as well as the other one.

Thigh Muscle Tightening

1. Sit on the floor with your injured leg in front of you and slightly bent.
2. Push your heel down on the floor.
3. Once the muscle at the back of your thigh is tight, tighten the muscles at the front of your thigh by flexing them slightly.
4. Hold this position for five seconds.
5. Repeat this exercise 10 times, two to three times per day.
6. Stop when you are able to perform leg lifts.

Leg Lifts

1. When your knee is not too painful, begin doing leg lifts.
2. Lie on your back on the floor.
3. Bend the uninjured knee.
4. Hold the injured leg straight and tighten up the muscles on the front of the thigh.
5. Lift the injured leg slowly so it is parallel with your other thigh and hold it in that position for three seconds.
6. Lower your leg slowly.
7. Repeat this exercise 15 to 20 times, two to three times per day.
8. When the exercise becomes too easy, wear ankle weights on the injured leg or attach a fanny pack containing a soup can around your ankle.
9. It's a good idea to do this exercise with both legs.

Knee Bends

1. Stand facing a table and hold on to it for support.
2. Bend your injured knee and raise your heel as high as possible.
3. Hold this position for five seconds.

4. Slowly lower your foot and straighten your knee.
5. Repeat this exercise 15 to 20 times, two to three times per day.
6. When it becomes too easy, wear ankle weights or attach a fanny pack containing a soup can around your ankle.
7. It's a good idea to do this exercise with both your legs.

Balance

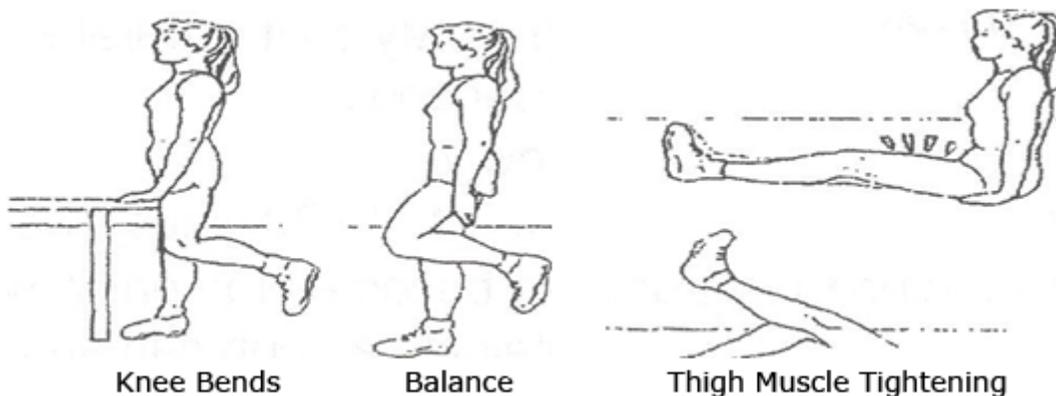
1. Balance on the foot of your injured leg with your injured knee bent slightly.
2. Hold this position for 30 seconds.
3. When the exercise becomes easy, close your eyes.
4. Repeat the exercise three to five times per day.
5. Alternatively, if watching television, balance on your injured leg during commercial breaks.

Endurance Activities

1. Swimming or riding a stationary cycle are, excellent ways to maintain endurance.
2. Swimming should be supervised by an adult.
3. Start swimming for about 15 minutes a day and increase the time as you can tolerate it.
4. Do not do the frog kick if your medial collateral ligament is sprained (check with your doctor).
5. You can ride a stationary cycle as soon as you have enough range of motion in your knee to do so without pain.
6. Set the seat high enough so that your knees are only slightly bent (10 to 15 degrees) at the bottom of the pedal stroke.
7. Set the resistance at a light to moderate level.
8. Begin riding at 80 to 90 revolutions per minute for 10 to 15 minutes.
9. Progress to higher resistance and longer sessions while maintaining your pedal speed.

Functional Activities

1. When you can walk without pain or a limp, try jogging straight ahead on a smooth surface.
2. Later, run in a figure-eight pattern and then a zigzag pattern.
3. Begin by jogging for 10 to 15 minutes a day and gradually increase the time.
4. If you experience pain or swelling of your knee during or after exercise, you are exercising too intensely or for too long.



This information should not be used as substitute for the medical care and advice of your child's physician. Health related topics found on the Andorra Pediatrics web site should not be used for diagnosing purposes or be substituted for medical advice. As with any new or ongoing treatment, always consult your professional healthcare provider before making any changes in treatment or beginning any new treatment. If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office.