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POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR LATERAL RELEASE

Lateral release is a procedure designed to cut the retinaculum (tight ligaments) on the lateral (outside) of the knee that holds the patella in an excessive laterally tilted position. Following your surgery, your knee will be swollen for the first several weeks. It is important that you follow this rehab protocol and to begin physical therapy very soon following surgery in order to achieve the best possible result.

1. Elevate the knees above the heart level for 24-48 hours after surgery. Partial weightbearing with the aid of crutches is permitted as tolerated.
2. ICE! Ice your knee at least 2-3 times per day starting on the day of surgery. Fill a zip lock bag with ice and lay the bag over the top of the knee. Leave in place for 20 minutes on bare skin or 40 minutes if icing over the ace bandage.
3. Begin range of motion of the knee as soon as possible after surgery. It is important to work on extending the knee to the fully extended position as well as flexing the knee as far as can be tolerated. The ultimate goal is to be able to fully extend the knee.
4. Exercises to begin on the first day following surgery are:
 - A. Quad sets (tightening up the thigh)-4 sets per day of 25 repetitions per set
 - B. Straight-leg raises (with knee locked in extension)-4 sets per day of 25 repetitions per set
 - C. Vigorous foot, ankle, and toe movements – 20 ankle pumps per waking hour
5. You may discontinue use of crutches when you are able to walk with a normal gait and without a limp. Generally, this will take approximately 2-3 weeks.
6. You may shower 2 days after surgery. Let clear water run over the incisions, do not scrub them. No baths or soaking the incision until 10 days after surgery.
7. Strong oral pain medication will be prescribed for use during the first few days. Please attempt to use sparingly, using aspirin, Tylenol, or ibuprofen products to supplement the prescribed pain medication. If additional pain medication is needed, please call the office during regular business hours, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
8. Report any worrisome condition to your surgeon immediately. This includes unrelenting pain or swelling, fever, chills, and redness or drainage of the wound.
9. Make sure that an appointment has been scheduled for you to return to the clinic approximately 1 week following surgery. Frequently, a physical therapy appointment will also be made for you at or about the same time.