

# ACL Reconstruction After Your Operation



## Information for Patients

This leaflet has been written to give you the right information about ACL surgery and what you can do to help with your recovery.

The following information and advice have been written in line with the physiotherapy and surgical teams at James Paget University Hospital.

If you have had your surgery at another hospital or you were given specific instructions that are different to the information below, you should consult your surgeon or physiotherapist before undertaking any of the exercises/advice.

### What is ACL reconstruction surgery?

ACL stands for anterior cruciate ligament and reconstruction surgery involves using a different part of your anatomy (normally tendon) to replace the ACL you have injured.

### What should I expect after my surgery?

**Pain:** ACL reconstruction surgery will likely be painful but this tends to differ from person to person. The pain from your operation is likely to be with you for some time, possibly weeks or months, but this is normal and to be expected.

**Swelling:** It is very normal to find that your knee doesn't move fully after your operation. Both bending and straightening may feel difficult and tight. This is normal and will improve with time and exercise.

**Difficulty walking:** After your operation your knee will be swollen. The swelling will often hang around for some time, maybe weeks into months. However, just because the swelling is still there, doesn't mean there's a problem, it is quite normal and to be expected.

### What can I do to help myself?

**Rehabilitation:** Rehabilitation is really key to a successful recovery. Your rehabilitation will take some time and will require patience and perseverance but if done correctly, you will likely achieve the best possible result.

The rehabilitation will be completed in phases or stages which means there will be certain things you should/shouldn't do in the early stages but might be able to do more of as time passes.

**Be kind to yourself:** You have just had a considerable joint operation which is a significant thing to ask your knee to undergo. Your body is amazing and can sort most issues out by itself, but the pain and difficulties can make you feel vulnerable, drained and sometimes a bit lost. By working alongside your physiotherapist and by being patient with yourself and your knee, you will give it the best possible chance to improve.

### I've been given crutches, what do I do with them?

If you have been given crutches after your operation you can find instructions on how to use them on our website.

**Search online for:** [Norfolk and Waveney MSK services](#) 'walking aids'

### Will it get better?

For most people, ACL surgery may not be a pleasant experience but reassuringly, it does have the potential to get better. By understanding the issue as best you can and by adjusting what is sore to then allow you to explore some exercise/s, is often the best formula for success.

If you would like to know more about ACL surgery or find a greater choice of exercises, you can explore our dedicated webpage.

**Search online:** [Norfolk and Waveney MSK services](#) 'ACL surgery'

## Exercises



On the bed. Slide your heel towards your bottom and away again.  
Complete little and often throughout the day.



Sitting. Place a chair in front of you with a cushion or rolled up towel on it. Put your heel on the cushion/towel and allow your knee to relax.  
Complete little and often throughout the day.



If you would like this leaflet in large print, audio, Braille or in a different language, please contact us on **01502 445447**.

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