

Knee Rehabilitation At Home

Strengthening Without Special Equipment

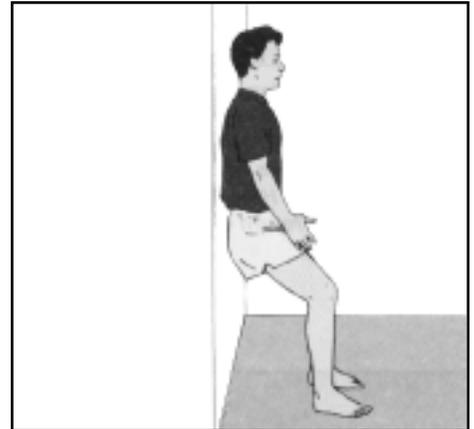
Following a knee injury or surgery, leg strength must be fully regained to ensure a safe return to sports and other activities. Starting a strength program is relatively easy if you belong to a fitness center or have exercise equipment at home. But what if you don't have access to equipment? Do you need to join a fitness center or buy weights for home use?

Not necessarily. With a little creativity, you can do very well at home without exercise equipment (Figures 1 through 8). But before you try these or any other knee exercises, review the following important points:

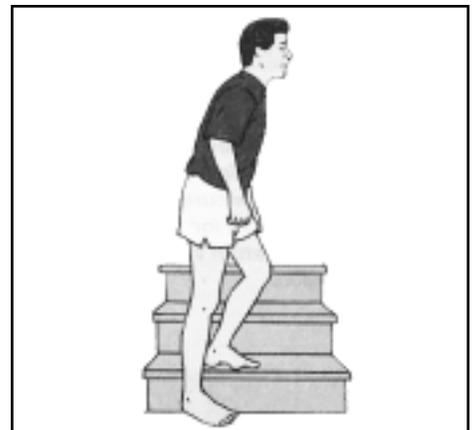
- The goals of a complete knee rehabilitation program are to regain normal strength, power, endurance, flexibility, balance, agility and heart and lung fitness. The exercises presented here focus primarily on strength training and therefore must be supplemented to create a comprehensive program.
- Not all exercises are appropriate for every injury. Follow Dr. Re's recommendations as to what activities or knee positions you should avoid. Have Dr. Re circle which of these exercises would work best for your condition. Discontinue any exercise that causes significant pain during or after the exercise session.
- Exercise every other day. This allows adequate time for your leg

muscles to recover and be ready for the next session.

- How many repetitions you perform of a particular exercise will depend on how strong you are, how many different exercises you are performing, and what your goals are for the exercise session. But start your exercise program conservatively. One set of 6 to 12 repetitions for each exercise is usually adequate. As you become stronger, gradually increase to four sets of 6 to 12 repetitions with 1- to 2-minute rests between sets. You can increase the difficulty of the exercises by increasing the number of repetitions or by shortening the rest period. To avoid injury, always progress slowly and pay attention to your body. Stop exercising if you have pain, or if you are unable to perform the exercise correctly.
- Keep a log of your exercise sessions. This will make it easier to monitor your progress and will help you stay diligent with your program.

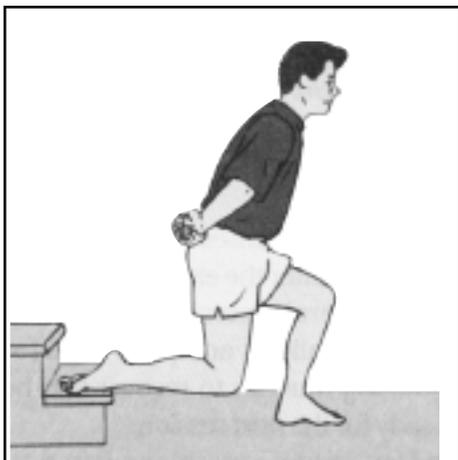


1. Wall Sit. Stand with your back against a wall. Your feet should be shoulder-width apart and about a foot from the wall. Lower your buttocks a few inches and hold this position as long as possible. Repeat three to six times. Variations: (1) Squeeze a ball between your knees. (2) Straighten one knee to lift one foot off the ground while maintaining a partial squat. Alternate knees.

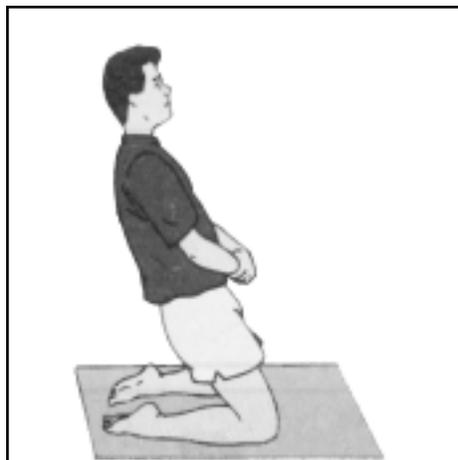


2. Step Down. Stand sideways on a bottom step, with your injured leg nearest the staircase. Slowly bend the injured knee until the opposite foot lightly touches the floor, then slowly straighten the injured knee. Variations: (1) Use a higher step. (2) Reach out with foot on the uninjured side to different points on the floor. (3) Hold a light weight in each hand.

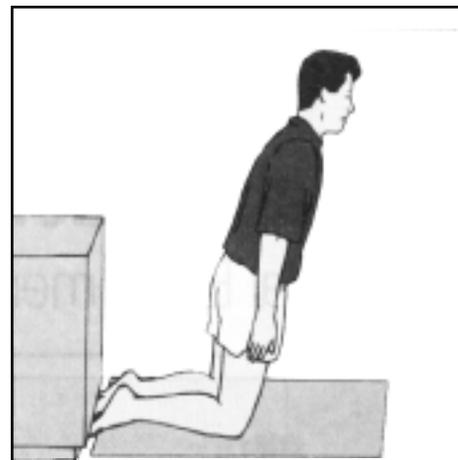
Knee Rehabilitation At Home (Continued)



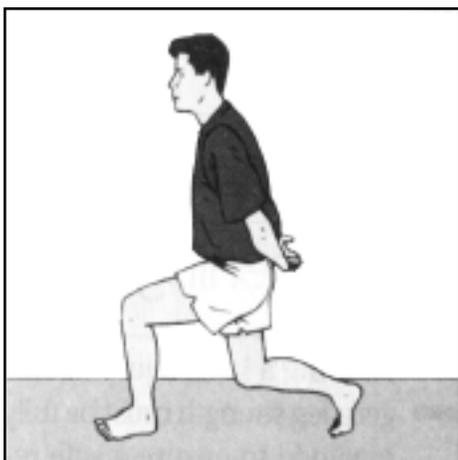
3. One-Legged Squat. Place the foot of the uninjured leg top down on a step behind you. Slowly bend the injured knee while keeping the knee positioned over the foot, then slowly straighten the knee. Variations: (1) Vary the depth of the squat. (2) Hold a light weight in each hand.



4. Kneel Backward Lean. While kneeling, slowly lean backward 3 to 6 inches while keeping your abdominal (stomach) muscles tight. (Make sure not to arch your back.) Hold for 10 seconds. Slowly return to the starting position.



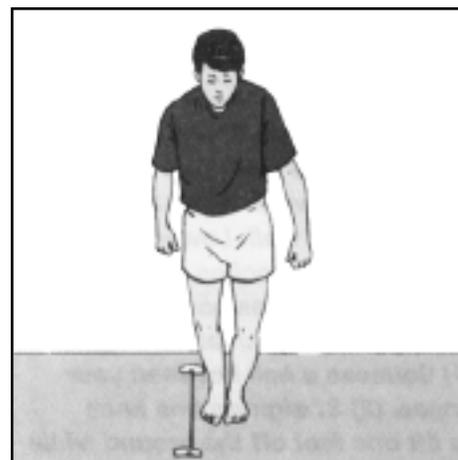
5. Kneel Forward Lean. While kneeling, hook your feet under a secure and slowly lean forward 3 to 6 inches while not arching your back. Hold for 10 seconds. Slowly return to the starting position.



6. Forward Lunge. From standing position, step forward with the injured leg. Bend your front knee 90°, keeping it over your foot. At the same time, lower your back knee until it is 2 to 3 inches from the floor, then return to standing. Alternate legs. Variation: Hold small hand weights.



7. Side Lunge. Step out to the side with the foot of the injured leg while keeping your knee above your foot. Keep the uninjured knee straight and your hips facing forward as you bend the injured knee and lower your hips toward the floor. Alternate legs.



8. Side Hop. Place a rope or a similar object on the floor to make a line. Keeping your feet together, repeatedly hop sideways over the line and back again. Variations: (1) Hop on one foot. (2) Increase the height of the jump.