

# Anterior cruciate ligament reconstruction (ACLR) post-operative rehabilitation classes

**This leaflet explains more about the post-operative ACLR rehabilitation classes at St Thomas' Hospital. If you have any further questions, please speak to the physiotherapist caring for you.**

## What are the ACLR classes?

Physiotherapy is vital to your recovery following your ACL reconstruction (ACLR). The ACLR rehabilitation classes are physiotherapy-led exercise classes, specifically designed for people who have recently had an ACL reconstruction. The classes aim to improve your knee strength, range of movement, balance, knee control and function, in line with your goals following surgery.

After your operation you will be booked into the ACLR Early class which starts at 7.45am on a Wednesday morning. The class lasts for about 90 minutes. You will be assessed by a physiotherapist who will look at your knee mobility, muscle strength and walking ability, and will discuss any problems you might have.

You are expected to attend the ACLR Early class each week until around 12 weeks following your operation. It is crucial for you to attend these sessions to allow the physiotherapists to check your progress and move you on to the next stage in your rehabilitation. In your final session of the ACLR Early class, an assessment will have been completed to test the strength and balance of your operated knee, and you will also have been asked to complete a questionnaire on your progress so far.

You will then enter the Middle phase of rehabilitation - from 3-6 months. During this period it is crucial that you complete regular exercise at least twice a week to continue to increase the strength and control of your operated knee.

If your goals are to return to demanding sports that require jumping, pivoting and changing direction on your affected knee, you will be booked onto the ACLR Late class (at your final ACLR Early class). This will be about six months post-surgery and takes place on a Monday 5.15pm for about 90 minutes. This class will allow you to get ready to return to sport. If your goals do not include these activities, you do not need to attend the ACLR Late class. You are expected to attend the ACLR Late class for at least 10 consecutive weekly classes.

## What should I expect from the ACLR Classes?

You may have increased swelling and soreness after your first few ACLR Early classes – this is normal after your ACL operation when exercising. The following information may help you to manage this:

### Swelling

To reduce swelling in your operated leg you should rest with your leg elevated for an hour at a time, for regular intervals throughout the day. Use pillows or cushions to ensure your foot is raised above the level of your knee and your knee is raised above the level of your hip. When resting your leg, make sure that the knee is in a straight position. Do not be tempted to put pillows under your knee to make it more comfortable. You can use a cold or ice pack for 15 to 20 minutes, three or four times a day.

### Pain

It is important to keep your pain controlled as this will allow you to move around and complete your exercises. If your pain is not controlled it may delay your progress. Therefore if you need to, please continue to take your pain medication or seek advice from your GP if your pain medication is not working for you.

## Should I do the exercises at home?

Yes. To get the maximum benefit from the class, it is important that you also repeat the exercise programme either at home or at a local gymnasium. The exercises in the class are designed so that this is possible. You will be advised how often and how many repetitions of each exercise you should do.

## Who can use the service?

This service is available to all patients who have undergone an ACLR at Guy's Hospital or another NHS Trust.

## Where do I need to go?

The class takes place in the Physiotherapy Gym, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Lambeth Wing at **St Thomas' Hospital**.

## Does it cost anything?

The class is free for NHS patients.

## What should I wear?

Please wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing which allows you to move, and trainers.

## What do I need to bring with me?

If you use an inhaler, GTN spray or other medication, please bring these with you and inform the physiotherapist that you may need to stop and use these. Water is provided for you in the class.

## What if I am unable to attend?

If you are unable to attend any of your appointments please telephone and inform the appointment line, **t: 020 7188 5094** and reschedule your appointments. This is essential due to limited space in the gymnasium.

## Useful information

### Hospital transport:

If you are eligible for hospital transport and are using this service to attend the class, please book transport for half an hour before the class is due, to ensure that you arrive in plenty of time. If you arrive via hospital transport, a porter should be able to take you to the class. We do encourage people to walk back to transport after the class as part of regaining independence. If you need assistance, please let us know. Hospital transport, **t:** 020 7188 2888.

### Contact us

Classes take place in the Physiotherapy Gym, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Lambeth Wing at **St Thomas' Hospital**.

Appointment line, **t:** 020 7188 5094

Hospital transport, **t:** 020 7188 2888

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **w:** [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets)

### Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

**t:** 020 7188 8748, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm

### Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

**t:** 020 7188 8801 (PALS)      **e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

**t:** 020 7188 3514 (complaints)      **e:** [complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk)

### Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

**t:** 020 7188 8815      **e:** [languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

**t:** 111

### NHS website

Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing.

**w:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)



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