Physiotherapy after your hip arthroscopy

This leaflet gives you advice about recovering from your hip arthroscopy. It explains exercises you should do each day, things to look out for, and some general advice. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or the physiotherapist caring for you.

What is a hip arthroscopy?
Hip arthroscopy is a minimally invasive surgical technique that allows doctors to view the inside of the hip joint. This is performed with a fibre optic telescope which allows the doctor to perform some surgical procedures. For example:
- repair or trimming of cartilage
- removing loose bodies such as cartilage or bone fragments from the joint
- removal of the synovium (the membrane lining the hip joint).

Hip arthroscopy is most commonly performed for:
- labral tears - when the cartilage is torn, or coming away from the hip socket
- removal of loose bodies such as cartilage or bone fragments from the joint
- to treat femoral acetabular impingement (FAI) where there is too much friction (rubbing) in the hip joint.

How do I recover from my hip arthroscopy surgery?
Physiotherapy plays a very important role in your hip arthroscopy rehabilitation and there are specific exercises you need to do after surgery to restore your strength, control and mobility (movement). Your physiotherapist will discuss these with you and make sure you can do them safely and effectively.

Your physiotherapist will give you elbow crutches and teach you how to walk with them. Some people are instructed to partially weight bear (walking with only half of your weight on your operated side) and others can fully weight bear straight away. Your physiotherapist will tell you what your consultant has requested.

Hip arthroscopy exercise programme
Below are some exercises to help you recover after your surgery. Do these exercises at least 3-5 times a day for the first two weeks after your operation.
Repeat all exercises 10 times.
1. **Ankle pumps**
   - Lie on your back or sit down.
   - Bend and straighten your ankles briskly.

2. **Static Quadriceps contraction**
   - Lie on your back with legs straight.
   - Point your toes up to the ceiling and push your knees down firmly against the bed.
   - Hold for 2-3 seconds, then relax.

3. **Static Gluteal contraction**
   - Lie on your back or sit in a chair.
   - Squeeze your buttocks firmly together and hold for 2-3 seconds, then relax.

4. **Supported knee bends**
   - Lie on your back.
   - Bend and straighten your operated leg as far as comfortable.

5. **Lying hip abduction**
   - Lie on your back with your leg straight.
   - Slide your leg out to the side as far as you can, and then back to midline. You may need some help with this exercise at first.
6. **Standing hip abduction**
   - Stand holding on to a fixed surface such as a kitchen work top.
   - Keep your body straight with your hip, knee and foot facing forward.
   - Keep your knee straight while you slowly lift your leg out to the side, then return to the start position.

7. **Standing knee raises**
   - Stand holding on to a fixed surface such as a kitchen work top.
   - Lift your operated leg up toward your waist but make sure it does not come higher.
   - Hold for 2-3 seconds and put your leg down.

8. **Standing hip extension**
   - Stand holding on to a fixed surface such as a kitchen work top.
   - Keeping your operated leg straight, move it backwards but do not lean forwards.
   - Hold for 2-3 seconds and then bring back to the start position.

**Ongoing physiotherapy**

After you are discharged home, you may be referred for ongoing physiotherapy at Guys, St Thomas’ or at your local hospital. Physiotherapy will help you to regain function and achieve your goals. Your recovery will be fairly quick to start with, but you will continue to improve over the first year. Please be guided by your physiotherapist.
**Will I be in pain?**
You should expect a moderate amount of pain following your operation. You will be prescribed painkillers and it is important that you take these regularly as prescribed by the doctor looking after you, so that you can complete your exercises. You may experience some increase in discomfort but your pain level should not be more than 2-3 out of 10 when doing exercises. If this is a problem, discuss it with your physiotherapist.

**When can I leave hospital?**
You will be able to leave hospital when you can walk safely on your own with elbow crutches, and can complete the exercise programme on this leaflet. If you have stairs at home please let your physiotherapist know so that they can teach you how to use them safely.

**When can I resume my normal activities?**

**Work**
It is advisable to take at least two weeks off work after your operation, but this varies between patients and depends on the type of job you have. The first week after surgery should be dedicated to your recovery so you should not work at all during this time. It is realistic to start desk-based work at home in the second week, with a phased return afterwards provided your journey to work is manageable.

Return to full work is usually possible at 4-6 weeks, depending on how physically active your job requires you to be. Be aware that it will be tiring at first when you start back at work, and your rehabilitation will be ongoing, so setting time aside for your rehabilitation program and your physiotherapy appointments may still be needed.

**Sports**
After two weeks (once the pain has improved enough) you can start using a static bike *with the seat set higher than normal*, and exercise in a pool. By 6-8 weeks, the hip should function almost normally in day-to-day life. You should be able to resume your usual gym activities, but at a lower intensity.

After 2-3 months you can progress from using a static bike, to an elliptical (cross) trainer and finally a treadmill. Squats and deep lunges are not advised for at least three months after surgery as these cause unnecessary irritation to the surgical area.

Over the next 3-6 months further improvements are expected and a full recovery is determined by achieving your exercise goals. As a general guide, running and team sports are possible after 4-6 months. Please be advised by your consultant and your physiotherapist at your follow-up appointments.

**Driving**
If you are fully weight bearing, confident walking without crutches, can get into and out of a car unaided and do an emergency stop, then driving is possible after one week. Always check with your insurance company before driving after your surgery, as they may notify you their recommendations for driving.
What should I do if I have a problem?
If you experience any of the following please see your GP:
- sudden increase in swelling around the wound or the limb area
- the dressing has become loose or wet and requires changing
- the wound starts to smell,
- the wound starts to ooze
- the wound is more tender and you are experiencing more pain
- you have a temperature or start to feel unwell

Contact us
If you have any questions or concerns regarding physiotherapy, please contact the orthopaedic physiotherapy team, t: 020 7188 5432, Monday to Friday, 8.30am-6.30pm.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit w: 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
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) e: 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

NHS 111
This service 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 w: www.111.nhs.uk

NHS website
This website gives information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing. w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust
Members of Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, please get in touch.
t: 0800 731 0319 e: members@gstt.nhs.uk w: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk-membership