

***DR. SAFRAN'S STANFORD SPORTS MEDICINE***  
**HOME EXERCISE PROGRAM FOR**  
***ACL RECONSTRUCTION***

These exercises are to be performed **every day for the first 2 weeks** after your ACL Reconstruction

- 1) Keep your brace on at all times after your surgery
- 2) Keep your brace locked in full extension (knee straight) at all times except when in your CPM or when doing other knee range of motion exercises or sitting in a car or chair.
- 3) Walk with as much weight as you can tolerate on your operative leg using your crutches and with the brace locked in full extension
- 4) **Ice** your knee for 20 minutes every 2-3 hours. You may accomplish this with a cryocuff or other ice machine or a bag of frozen peas.
- 5) A **CPM (continuous passive motion)** machine may be authorized by your insurance company. This machine helps gain your motion a little faster than if you did not have it, but ultimately (at 1 year) it makes no difference on your final range of motion. Use this machine *at least* 6 hours a day (you may want to do this at night – if so, you will probably need sleeping pills (such as 50mg of Benadryl) to help you for the first few nights. Start at 0 - 60 degrees, and increase it 10 degrees every few hours as you can tolerate it. You may return the machine when your knee bends more than 90 degrees with the therapist or the machine is at its full range (0 – 120 degrees)
- 6) **Do Straight Leg Raises.** Lift your leg about 24 inches off the ground and hold it for 10 seconds. Do a minimum of 3 sets of 10 repetitions. Make sure you do this with your brace locked in full extension.
- 7) **Do Quad Sets.** With this exercise, you tighten your thigh muscles and hold it for 5 seconds. Do a minimum of 3 sets of 10 repetitions. When you tighten your thigh muscles, it will feel like your knee is being pushed into the ground. Make sure you do this with your brace locked in full extension.
- 8) **Move your kneecap** (patella) side to side. Move the kneecap toward the inner side of your leg and hold it for 5 seconds, then move it toward the outer side of your leg and hold it for 5 seconds. Do 3 sets of 10 repetitions in each direction.
- 9) **Heel slides.** Sitting up and your brace unlocked, slide your heel toward your buttock. This may be assisted by using a towel to pull your foot.
- 10) **Prone Hangs.** Lay on your belly with your knee off your bed or table and let your leg hang free. Keep this position for 5 – 10 minutes if you can tolerate it.

- 11) **Bridging exercise.** Roll a towel and put it under your heel with nothing under your knee. Keep this position for 5 – 10 minutes. You may assist this by resting your hand on your thigh, near the knee.
- 12) **Calf Pumps.** Move your ankles, both legs, up and down, at least 10 times an hour until you are up and around regularly to encourage blood flow in the calves and reduce the risk of DVT (blood clot).
- 13) Keep your knee dry until the sutures are removed by the doctor.
- 14) Take your pain medicine as your need, though not more frequently than every 4 hours. Do not wait until it is very painful before you take it, since it takes the medicine 30 –45 minutes to take effect.
- 15) You will also be given medicine to treat nausea, in case you have this after surgery.
- 16) Make sure you have your appointments for your dressing change 2-4 days after surgery and your appointment to see Dr. Safran about 10 days after your surgery.
- 17) Make sure you have your physical therapy scheduled.
- 18) If you have a fever of >101.5, increasing pain or signs of infection, call the office at 650-498-6202.