



# Rehabilitation after meniscal repair

## Arthroscopic meniscal repair

A meniscal repair stitches a torn meniscus so it can heal, which helps protect the knee in the long term. The repair needs protecting while it heals, so this programme is slower and more cautious than after a meniscus trim (meniscectomy). The exact plan depends on the type of tear and repair, and your team will confirm the details for you.

### At a glance

|                       |                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Weight bearing        | Protected for up to 6 weeks, depending on the repair. When full weight is allowed, it is only with the knee held straight in the brace |
| Brace                 | Hinged knee brace, usually for about 6 weeks                                                                                           |
| Knee bend             | Gentle movement from 0-90° to start with, increased as advised                                                                         |
| Walking aids          | Crutches, usually for about 6 weeks                                                                                                    |
| Normal daily function | Around 12 weeks                                                                                                                        |
| Return to sport       | Around 6 months, after a sport-specific rehabilitation programme                                                                       |

## Your recovery, stage by stage

### Protection phase **Weeks 0-6**

- Wear the brace as instructed. Walk with crutches, putting weight through the leg only as advised for your repair.
- Any weight bearing should be with the brace locked straight.
- Bend the knee gently between 0° and 90° as instructed, usually with the brace on or as shown by your physiotherapist.
- Avoid squatting, kneeling, twisting and pivoting on the leg.
- Focus on getting the knee fully straight, controlling swelling and keeping the thigh muscles working.

### Restoring movement and strength **Weeks 6-12**

- The brace and crutches are usually stopped, with the help of your physiotherapist.
- Knee bend is gradually increased towards normal.
- Strengthening progresses: exercise bike, step-ups, balance work and gentle closed-chain exercises.
- Continue to avoid deep squats and twisting under load until advised.

### Return to normal function **3-4 months**

- Most people return to normal daily activities at around 12 weeks.
- Progress to more demanding strengthening and, when advised, straight-line jogging.

## Return to sport **4-6 months**

- Sport-specific training, agility and change-of-direction work.
- Return to sport is usually at around 6 months, once strength, control and confidence are restored.

## Early exercises

### Ankle pumps

Point your feet up and down briskly, 10-20 times every hour while awake. This helps circulation and reduces the risk of blood clots.

### Straight leg raise (in brace)

With the brace locked straight, tighten the thigh muscle and lift the leg about 15 cm. Hold 5 seconds. Repeat 10 times.

### Knee straightening stretch

Rest your heel on a rolled towel so the knee is unsupported, and let it straighten for 5-10 minutes. Do not place a pillow under the knee.

### Static quads

Lying or sitting with the leg straight, tighten the muscle on the front of the thigh to push the back of the knee down. Hold 5 seconds, relax. Repeat 10 times.

### Assisted knee bending (0-90°)

Sitting or lying, gently bend the knee within the range you have been allowed, then straighten. Do not force the bend beyond 90° in the first weeks.

## Looking after yourself

### Wound care

Keep the dressing clean and dry. Stitches or clips are usually removed at around 10-14 days. Do not soak the wound in a bath, pool or hot tub until it has fully healed.

### Pain relief

Take your pain relief regularly in the early weeks, as prescribed, particularly before exercising. Reduce it gradually as the pain settles.

### Swelling

Rest with the leg raised, and use an ice pack wrapped in a towel for 15-20 minutes several times a day. Swelling can last for weeks or months and is common.

### Blood clot prevention

Follow the hospital's advice on blood-thinning medicine and stockings. Keep moving, do your ankle exercises, and drink plenty of fluids.

**Sources.** This guide is based on Mr Umar's practice and is guided by NICE and British Orthopaedic Association (BOA) guidance: NICE NG89: Venous thromboembolism in over 16s - reducing the risk; British Orthopaedic Association (BOA) - guidance and patient information.

## When to seek urgent help

**Call 999 or go to A&E if you have chest pain, sudden breathlessness or cough up blood.**

Contact the hospital where you had your operation straight away (or NHS 111 out of hours) if you have:

- Pain, swelling or tenderness in the calf
- The wound becomes red, hot or increasingly painful, or leaks fluid after the first few days
- A temperature above 38°C, shivering or feeling generally unwell
- A sudden increase in pain or swelling, or you cannot put weight on the leg as advised
- New numbness, tingling, coldness or weakness in the leg or foot



Latest version  
online

### Questions about your recovery?

Spire Regency, Macclesfield

Denise Rowbotham **01625 507472**

The Alexandra, Spire Manchester, Spire Hale and Circle Cheshire Danielle Heron **07528 523911**

Email: [admin@hipkneesurgeon.uk](mailto:admin@hipkneesurgeon.uk) · [umar-ortho.uk](mailto:umar-ortho.uk)

*This is general guidance. Always follow the specific instructions from your own surgical and physiotherapy team, as your programme may differ.*

Mr Muhammad Umar FRCS (T&O), Consultant Trauma & Orthopaedic Surgeon · GMC 6044607 · Version 1.0 · Last reviewed October 2026 · Next review October 2027