

# Total knee replacement exercises

## Phases 1, 2, and 3



# Total knee replacement exercises

## Phase 1

After surgery, your first goals are to control swelling and gain more motion in your knee. This will help you recover fully and return to your usual activities. Any pain should be kept to a tolerable level.

### How to control swelling

- Place an ice pack on your knee for 15 to 20 minutes, after exercise or 3 or more times each day.
- Lie down and elevate your leg on a stack of pillows 2 to 3 feet above your heart for 15 to 30 minutes, or until some swelling decreases.
- Do ankle pumps. Lie on your back with your legs straight. Bend your foot toward you, then point your foot away from you. Repeat 10 to 20 times every hour with each ankle.
- Begin walking around your house at first. When you feel stable and comfortable, you may start walking outside. Your physical therapist will help you decide when to make the transition.
- Use a walker each time you walk. Your physical therapist will tell you when you can walk without it.

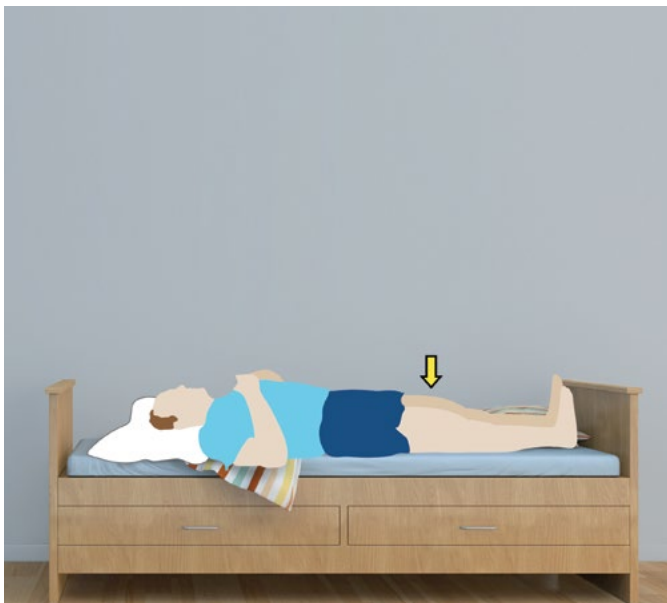
### How to gain more motion in your knee

- Begin moving on the day of surgery, with the help of your care team.
- Do your exercises at least 3 times a day.
- Move your knee often.
- When lying down, do not place anything under your knee.

## Exercises

These exercises will help you control swelling and gain motion in your knee.

### Quad (thigh) squeezes



- 1 Lie on your back with both legs straight.
- 2 Tighten the muscle on top of your thigh by pushing the back of your knee down toward the surface or bed.
- 3 Keep the muscle tight for up to 10 seconds, as tolerated. Relax.

*Repeat up to 10 times, at least 3 times each day.*

Special Instructions:

# Total knee replacement exercises

## Phase 1

### Heel slides



- 1 Lie on your back with both legs straight. Loop a towel behind your thigh. Hold the ends of the towel in each hand.
- 2 Slide your heel toward your buttock, bending your knee as much as you can. Help by pulling the towel with your arms. Move slowly. Keep your heel in touch with the surface or bed.
- 3 Slide your heel back to the starting position. Relax.

*Repeat up to 10 times, at least 3 times each day.*

Special Instructions:

### Knee straightening with ice



Do this after you complete your other exercises.

- 1 Place a large towel roll under your ankle so that there is space under your calf.
- 2 Place an ice pack on top of your knee.
- 3 Let your knee become straight.

*Relax your leg in this position for 20 minutes.*

Special Instructions:

# Total knee replacement exercises

## Phase 2

These exercises will help you recover fully and return to your usual activities. Start slowly and do as much as you can while managing your pain. You may feel more pain during exercise, but this should decrease quickly after you complete the exercise session.

If the exercises increase your pain, slow down until you can exercise at a more comfortable level.

### Pedaler or stationary bike



- 1 Sit so that your knee is almost straight when the pedal is at its furthest position from you.
- 2 Use your feet to move the pedals as if you were riding a bike.
- 3 If your knee is too stiff to complete a full cycle, just pedal until you feel a comfortable stretch in the front of your knee. Hold for 5 seconds, then move in the opposite direction until you feel the stretch again. Alternate directions until you can move the pedals all the way around.

*Start with 5 minutes and gradually increase to 10 minutes, keeping the resistance low. Do this at least 3 times each day.*

Special Instructions:

### Gluteal (buttock) squeezes



- 1 Lie on your back with both legs straight.
- 2 Squeeze your buttock muscles.
- 3 Keep the muscles tight for up to 10 seconds, as tolerated.

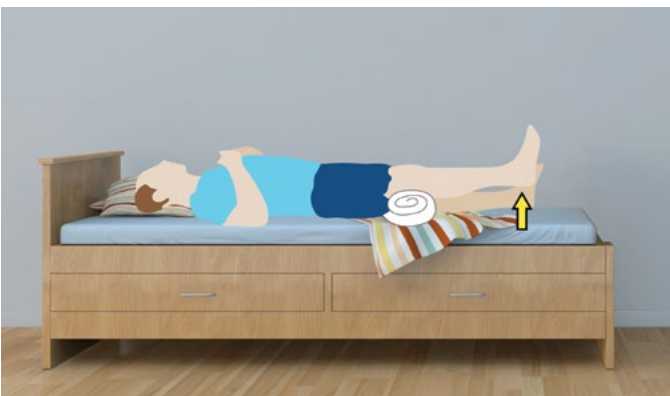
*Repeat 10 to 20 times, at least 3 times each day.*

Special Instructions:

# Total knee replacement exercises

## Phase 2

### Short arc leg lifts

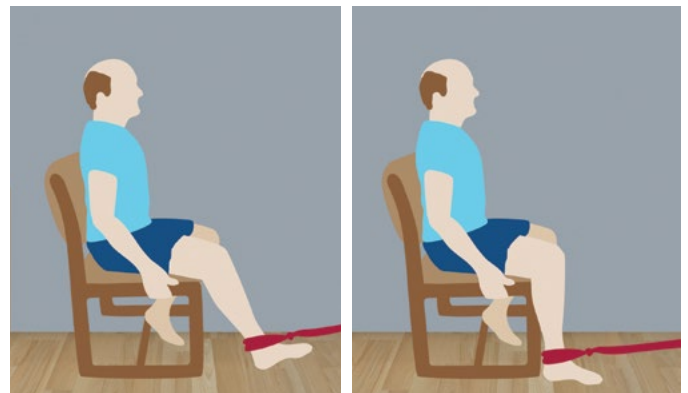


- 1 Lie on your back with a rolled pillow or towel under your surgical knee.
- 2 Keep the back of your knee on the pillow. Lift your foot as you straighten your knee.
- 3 Keep your knee straight up to 10 seconds, as tolerated.
- 4 Lower your foot slowly to the starting position.

*Repeat 10 to 20 times, at least 3 times each day.*

Special Instructions:

### Sitting knee bends



- 1 Wrap one end of the elastic band around your ankle and the other end around something sturdy like a table.
- 2 Bend your knee against the resistance of the band.
- 3 Slowly return to starting position.
- 4 Move your chair further away from the table to increase resistance.

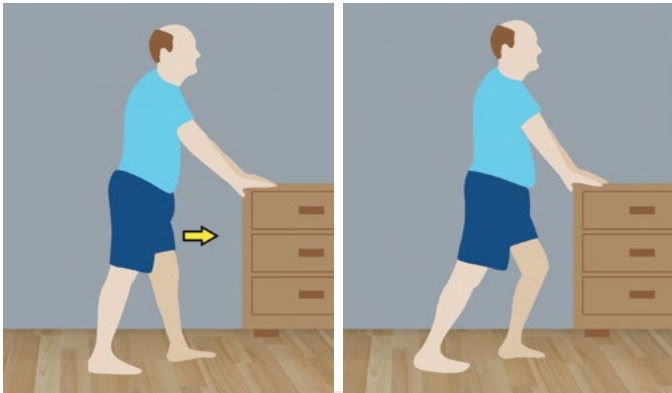
*Repeat 10 to 20 times, at least 3 times each day.*

Special Instructions:

# Total knee replacement exercises

## Phase 2

### Calf stretch



- 1 Hold on to a counter for balance.
- 2 Place one leg behind you with the knee straight, the heel on the ground, and the foot facing forward.
- 3 Move your hips forward until you feel a comfortable stretch in the calf of the back leg.

*Hold this stretch for 30 to 60 seconds.  
Repeat at least 3 times each day.*

Special Instructions:

### Hamstring stretch



- 1 Sit on the edge of a chair with your leg straight and your heel on the ground.
- 2 Lean forward, keeping your back straight, until you feel a comfortable stretch along the back of your thigh.

*Hold this stretch for 30 to 60 seconds.  
Repeat at least 3 times each day.*

Special Instructions:

# Total knee replacement exercises

## Phase 2

### Quadriceps stretch



- 1 Hold on to a counter for balance.
- 2 Place your foot on a chair behind you.
- 3 Stand up tall.
- 4 Tighten your buttock until you feel a comfortable stretch along the front of your thigh.

*Hold this stretch for 30 to 60 seconds. Repeat at least 3 times each day.*

Special Instructions:

### Knee straightening with ice



This should be done after your exercises. Follow instructions from Phase 1.

- 1 Place a large towel roll under your ankle so that your calf clears the bed.
- 2 Place an ice pack on top of your knee.
- 3 Let your knee become straight.

*Relax your leg in this position for 20 minutes.*

Special Instructions:

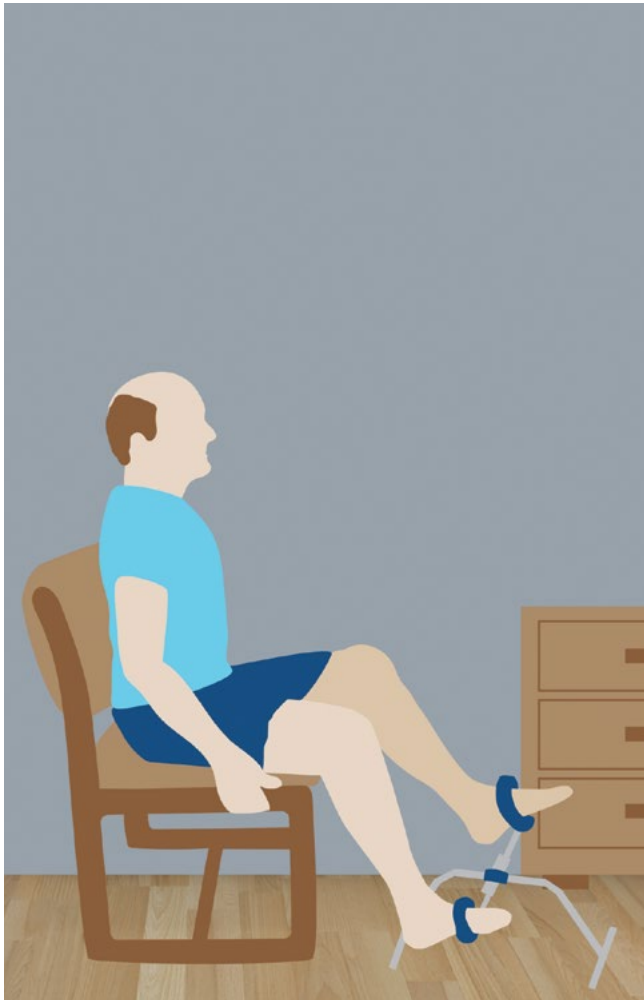
# Total knee replacement exercises

## Phase 3

These exercises will help you recover fully and return to your usual activities. Start slowly and do as much as you can while managing your pain. You may feel more pain during exercise, but this should decrease quickly after you complete the exercise session.

If the exercises increase your pain, slow down until you can exercise at a more comfortable level.

### **Pedaler or stationary bike**



Continue to do this exercise as you did in Phase 2.

- 1 Sit so that your knee is almost straight when the pedal is at its furthest position from you.
- 2 Use your feet to move the pedals as if you were riding a bike.
- 3 If your knee is too stiff to complete a full cycle, just pedal until you feel a comfortable stretch in the front of your knee. Hold for 5 seconds, then move in the other direction until you feel the stretch again. Alternate directions until you can move the pedals all the way around.

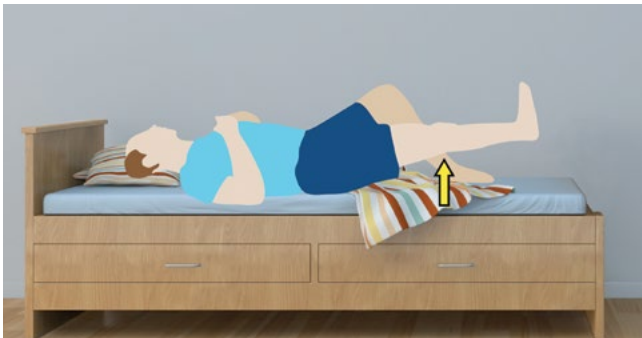
*Start with 5 minutes and gradually increase to 10 minutes, keeping the resistance low. Do this at least 3 times each day.*

Special Instructions:

# Total knee replacement exercises

## Phase 3

### Straight leg raise

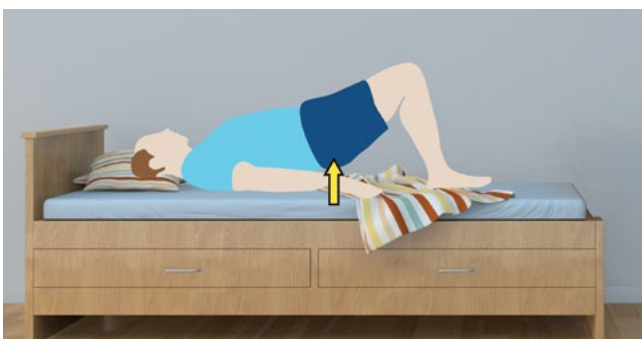
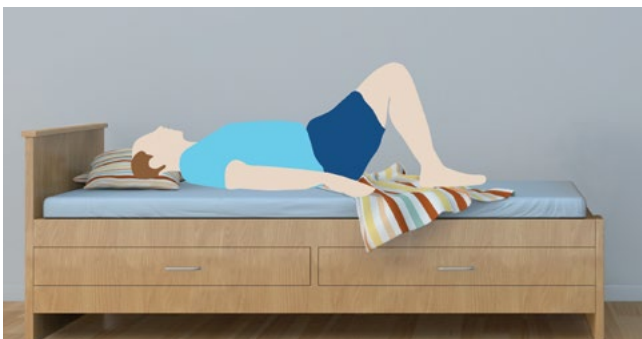


- 1 Lie on your back with the surgical leg straight and the other leg bent.
- 2 Keeping the leg straight, lift it off the bed no higher than the bent leg.
- 3 Lower your leg slowly to the starting position.
- 4 Repeat with the opposite leg.

*Repeat up to 10 times, at least 3 times each day.*

Special Instructions:

### Bridging



- 1 Lie on your back with both knees bent and your feet shoulder-width apart.
- 2 Lift your buttocks slightly off the bed.
- 3 Lower your buttocks slowly to the starting position.

*Repeat up to 10 times, at least 3 times each day.*

Special Instructions:

# Total knee replacement exercises

## Phase 3

### Side leg raise

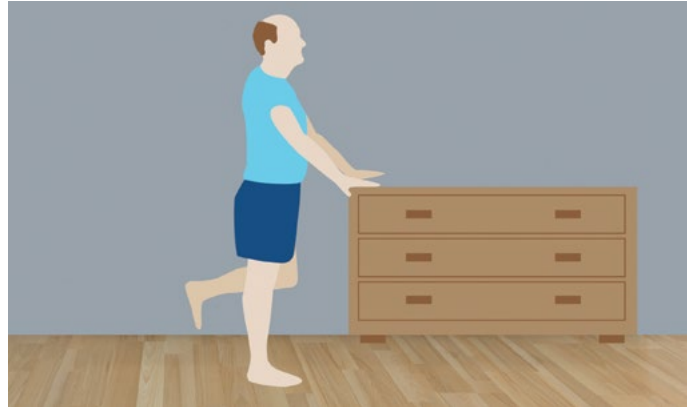


- 1 Hold on to a counter for balance. Stand on one leg.
- 2 Lift your other leg out to the side. Avoid leaning as you lift your leg.
- 3 Repeat on each leg.

*Repeat up to 10 times, at least 3 times each day.*

Special Instructions:

### Single leg balance

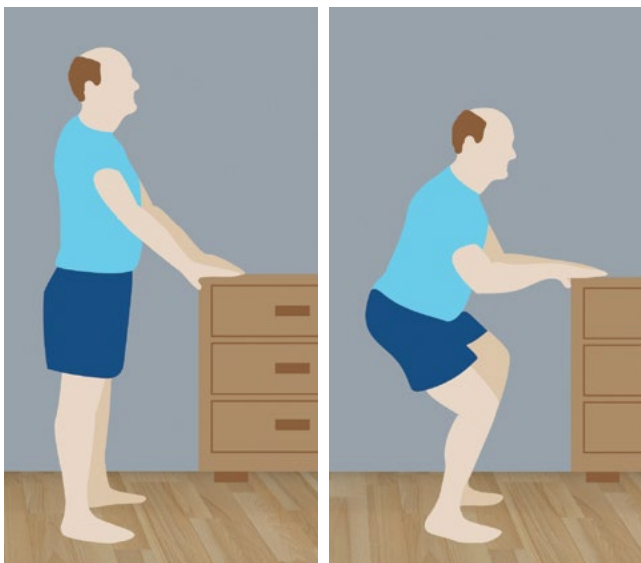


- 1 Hold on to a counter for balance.
- 2 Lift one foot behind you so that you are standing on one leg. Keep your waist level.
- 3 Stand upright. Hold for up to 20 seconds. Lower your foot back to the floor.

*Repeat 2 times on each leg, at least 3 times each day.*

Special Instructions:

### Squats



- 1 Hold on to a counter for balance.
- 2 Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- 3 Squat by bending your knees and sticking your buttocks back. Keep your knees over your toes and equal weight on both feet.
- 4 Return to standing.

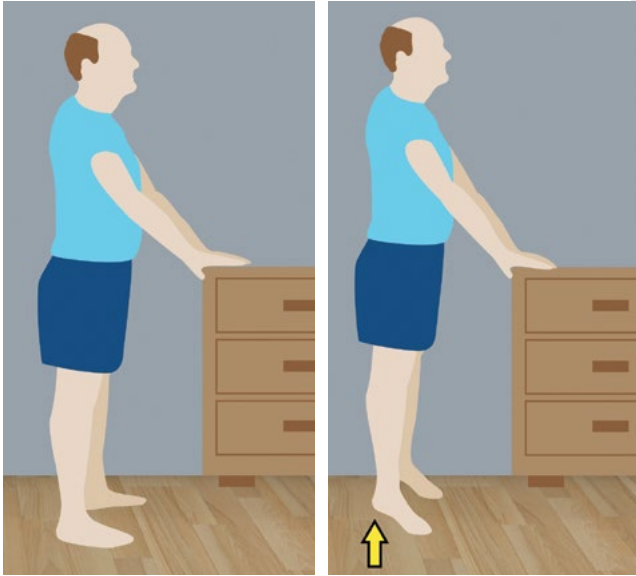
*Repeat up to 10 times, at least 3 times each day.*

Special Instructions:

# Total knee replacement exercises

## Phase 3

### Heel raise



- 1 Hold on to a counter for balance.
- 2 Use both feet to rise up onto your toes, keeping equal weight on both feet.
- 3 Slowly lower the heels.

*Repeat up to 20 times, at least 3 times each day.*

Special Instructions:

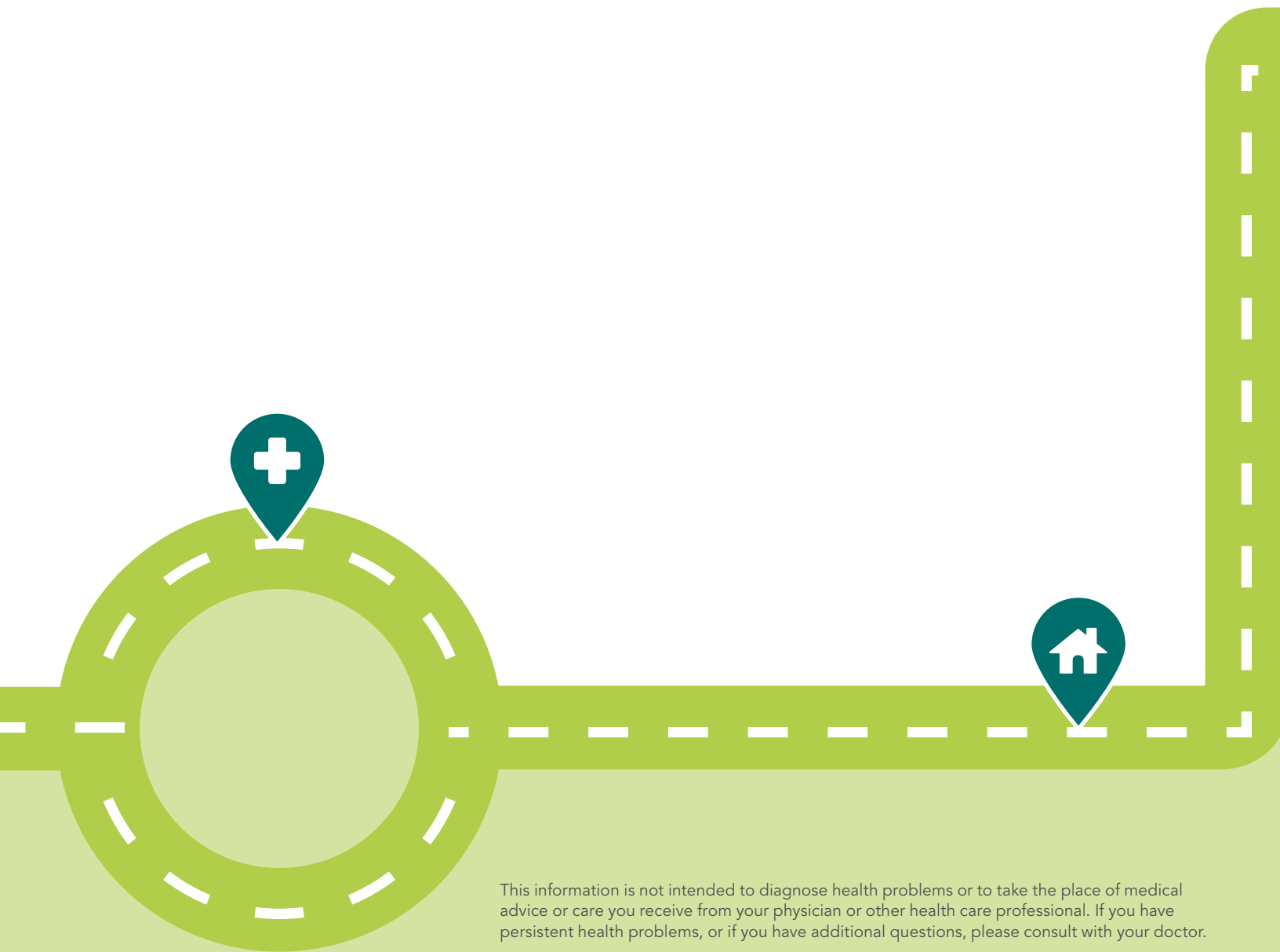
### Knee straightening on stomach



- 1 Lie on the bed with a rolled towel under your thigh, a pillow under your belly, and your foot off the edge of your bed.
- 2 Relax your leg until you feel a comfortable stretch along the back of your knee.

*Hold this stretch for 1 to 5 minutes, as tolerated.*

Special Instructions:



This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor.

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