

Jeffrey B. Witty, M.D.
North Oaks Orthopaedic Specialty Center
Hammond, LA 70403
Day phone: (985) 230 – 2663
After hours number: (985) 345 - 2700
Fax: (985) 230 – 2665
Website: drjeffreywitty.com



Initial Postoperative Knee Care – Patella or Quadriceps Tendon Repairs:

- Videos are available on Dr. Witty’s website: drjeffreywitty.com

Important Phone Numbers:

- Please see the contact information above for important phone numbers to call.
- If you have concerns after hours, please call the “After hours number” to reach our on-call services.

Physician Followup:

- Appointments for post surgery followup can be made one of two ways.
 - o Either call the day phone number above to make an appointment with the doctor yourself.
 - o The nursing staff at our facility can make the appointment for you
 - o The time to your first followup will be confirmed prior to leaving for the day.

Weightbearing:

- You may put weight down on your leg.
- The leg **must remain completely straight**, with the **brace locked with the knee in the straight position**, and the foot should be in a level position with the floor.

Wound Care and Dressing Change:

- You will typically have a large tan/brown colored ACE type of wrap around the leg from the foot to the thigh. In some cases you may have a stocking instead. There will be a brace on your leg.

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- This can be removed 3 days after surgery.
- In order to get the dressings off, you will have to remove the brace.
- **TO REMOVE THE BRACE:**
 - Keep knee straight and the extremity flat on the table or floor.
 - Simply unclick the buckles along the front of the brace. There are usually 4 total. See the image above.
 - Open the brace up.
 - You can then slide / push the brace out from under the leg while keeping the knee completely straight and without lifting off the surface.



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- Another option to remove the brace is to have someone lift the leg by the foot to keep the knee completely straight. **YOU MUST NOT MAKE ANY ATTEMPT TO HELP THE ASSISTANT.** Your quadriceps muscle (large muscle on front of thigh) must be completely relaxed. You can look and feel the muscle to check this.
 - Move the leg to a sturdy surface and prop it up by the lower half of the leg/ankle/foot so that the knee is kept completely straight.
 - Leave enough room to remove the brace and unwrap and change dressings.
- **TO UNWRAP DRESSINGS:**
 - Note that any lifting of the leg off the table or other surface will activate your quadriceps muscle which will in turn stress the repair of the quadriceps or patella tendon
 - You can either cut the dressings off by running sissors directly down the front of the leg, or you can take them off by pushing them underneath the extremity as you unwrap them.

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- Underneath will typically be some padding material and underneath that material will be gauze like material.

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- - Underneath the gauze will be either small tape like dressings called Steri-strips or you will see the incision and any sutures / skin clips themselves.



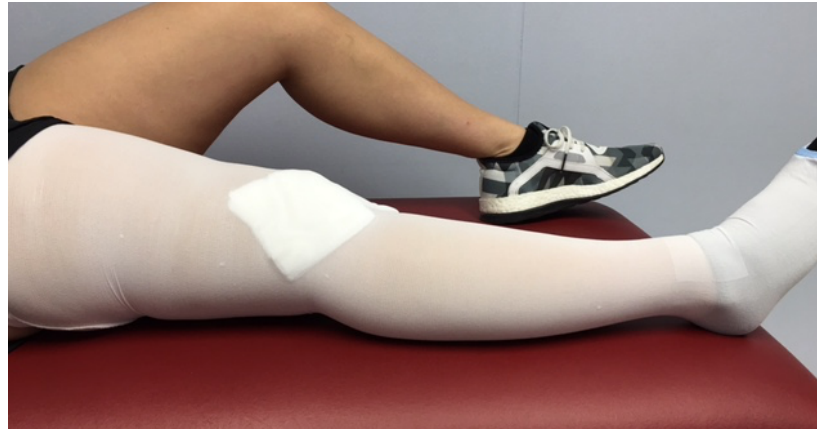
- - There may be thin, yellow gauze directly on the surgery incision.

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- Incisions are typically closed with metal skin clips, non-absorbable (non-dissolving sutures), or absorbable (dissolving) sutures.
- The first time you remove the dressings, the Steri-strips or the yellow gauze may be stuck to the skin and do not peel off easily. These can be left in place. They will eventually fall off. Change your dressing once a day with 4 inch by 4 inch gauze and re-wrap the ACE bandage or reapply the stocking over the gauze.
- **TO REPLACE DRESSINGS:**
 - Keep your extremity flat and straight on the floor or table.
 - Place the new gauze on top of the incision.
 - Pull the stocking up the leg and over the gauze while keeping the extremity still and completely straight. This is to avoid activating and tensioning the tendon that was repaired during surgery. You may also use an ACE bandage and wrap around leg in a reverse manner from when you removed it the first time.

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- If you have propped the leg (as described above) with an assistants help, you should have enough room to work around the leg with the ACE or to slide on the compression stocking

- TO REPLACE THE BRACE:

NOTE: Go to <http://www.djoglobal.com/products/donjoy/x-act-rom-knee> to see a complete video of the details of the ROM brace. If this is not your

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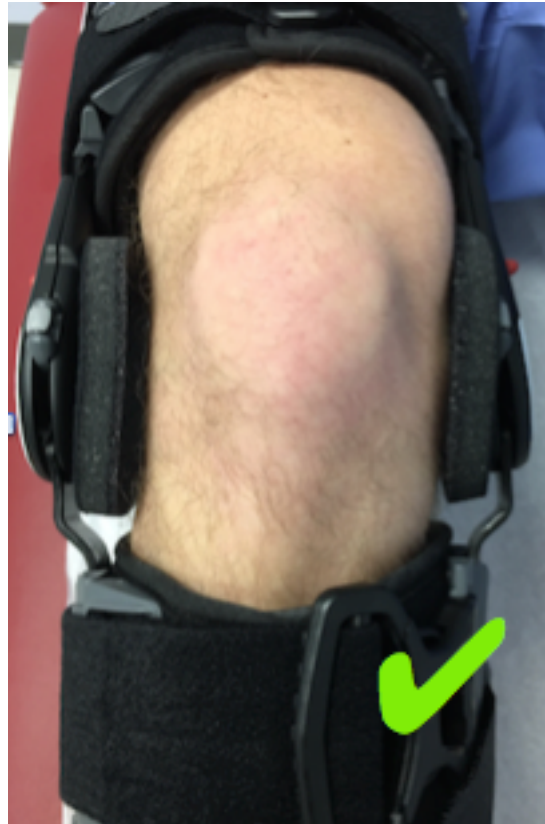
brace, keep in mind that most braces have similar components that do the same thing. See general instructions below.

- Slide the brace back underneath the leg while keeping the knee completely straight.
- Re-hook the buckles. Make sure the side supporting bars are directly along the mid-thigh and leg area



- Make sure the gears on the dials along the inside and outside of the brace line up with the knee at about the level of the kneecap.

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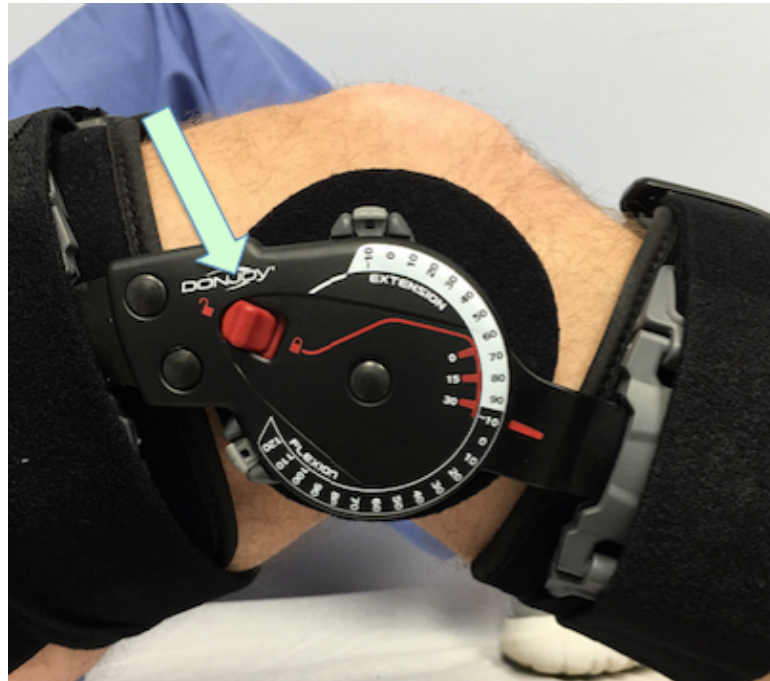


- Make sure the brace is then “LOCKED” in the fully straightened position. Note the closed lock on the dial of the brace. You will be instructed on when to start to open the brace for more motion.



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- You will click the switch to unlock when you have been cleared to start knee motion.



- You may stop the dressing changes once the gauze has no spotting or drainage on it for a 24-hour period. You may remove the Steri-strips or the yellow gauze at this time.

Nerve Block Information:

- The anesthesia team may have placed a nerve block prior to surgery
- A nerve block is a procedure where numbing medication is injected around the nerves that travel to your knee.
- It should provide 6 – 12 hours of relief. During that time, the knee may feel numb and you may even be unable to move the extremity.
- Start taking your pain medication immediately when you start to feel any pain even if it is minimal.
- Monitor your skin closely and place a towel between the skin and any ice pack to avoid frost bite. This is important when the block is working because you will not be able to feel anything.

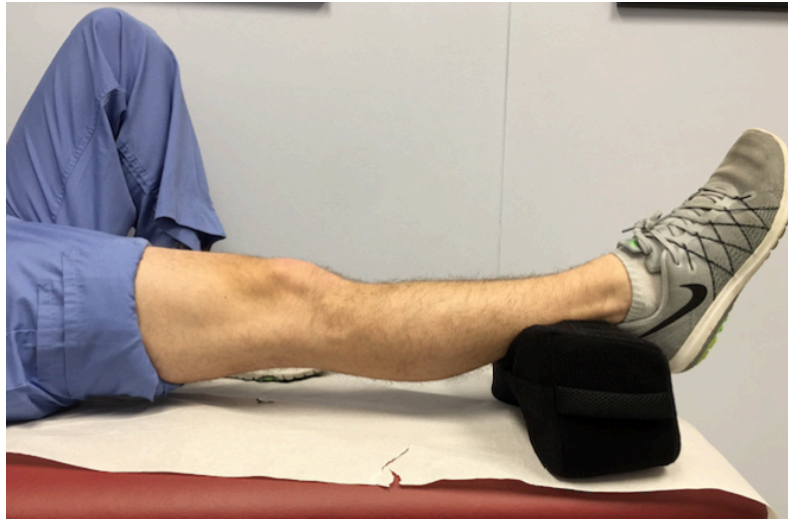
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Recovery at Home:

- If you are discharged the day of surgery, the first meal at home should be clear liquids. Slowly increase to other easily tolerated meals (ex. rice cakes, soup) to prevent any nausea. Taking your pain medication with some food may help.
- If you have received a nerve block, it will often begin to wear off later in the evening. Take the pain medication right when you begin to feel any pain. (See Nerve Block section below)
- Apply the ice pack 30 minutes on and 30 minutes off to help minimize pain and swelling. Because you may not be able to feel how cold the skin is getting, please remember to check the skin often while the nerve block is in effect. It is common to use the ice packs for the first few months after surgery when the knee gets sore, especially after therapy.
- Ice therapy has been shown to be as effective as narcotic pain medication so it is an important addition to the post-operative regimen. If you have a specialized ice and compression machine, use per instructions provided by the device representative.
- Try to get up and move around as much as possible using crutches.
- Prop your leg up by placing a bump of pillows or similar underneath the calf, ankle, or foot area. This will help gravity pull your knee straight. This can be done in or out of the brace. (See below)

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- If you begin to have painful swelling, redness, temperature greater than 100.4, or drainage from your incision, call Dr. Witty's office immediately.

Showering:

- You may take your first shower once the wounds have been completely dry for a 24-hour period.
- You may let the water run over the incision. Be sure to dry thoroughly by lightly pressing with a clean cotton towel. **DO NOT RUB** the incision to dry it.
- Use of a shower chair is recommended after this surgery to you can sit comfortably and prop foot on floor to keep your knee completely straight.
 - o Sit towards front edge of chair so that you whole leg and knee can remain straight.
- Only start showers once your dressings have been dry for a 24-hour period. **Do NOT** soak in the bath until cleared by physician.