

The Role of Exercise Pre-Surgery.

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Why exercise pre-surgery?

Exercise prior to surgery helps develop strength in the injured area, may provide some pain relief and gives the physiotherapist an opportunity to educate the client on proper movement patterns so that post surgery they are primed to engage in their recovery as soon as it is safe to do so. Studies have also suggested that strengthening pre-surgery gives clients a sense of empowerment leading into the surgery which in turn decreases stress and increases the likelihood of positive post-surgical outcomes. Additionally, the correct exercises may assist in the management of swelling in an acute injury and lessen the likelihood of subsequent injury.

What type of exercise?

The type of exercise will vary depending on the injured area. It may focus directly in and around the immediate injured area such as strengthening the hamstrings or quadriceps pre ACL surgery, or conversely, it may focus more around maintaining cardiovascular fitness such as cycling on a stationary bike if the individual had a significant upper limb injury. Additionally, where appropriate the individual may look to develop increased proprioceptive/balance skills as well as learn or refine new movements such as correct squat or

deadlift technique. Further to this, education around correct application of immediate post-surgery exercises such as contracting and relaxing specific muscles/muscle groups as well as mobility education such as stair climbing technique or forearm crutch use serves as a key learning opportunity not to be missed.

Post surgery, often hydrotherapy and clinical Pilates/functional strength training serve as cornerstones of the individual's rehab. In becoming familiar with these settings pre-surgery it makes the transition post-acute surgery a less daunting experience and often again accelerates recovery.

How much exercise?

How much exercise you do is dependent on a number of factors including the degree of injury as well as the individual's pre-injury capacity. In general, this pre-habilitative stage is best used to develop those skills needed in the short and mid-term post surgery rather than reflect necessarily the end of stage rehabilitation skills.

Who can help me pick the correct exercises?

Professionals with specific training in pre and post-surgical protocol such as Physiotherapist and Exercise Physiologist will often work hand in hand to develop a personalised program both pre and post surgery to get the individual back to full function safely and as soon as possible.

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