

Post Lower Limb Bypass Surgery Exercise Program

What To Expect Post-Op

Following your vascular bypass surgery, you will be on bedrest for 24 hours. After 24 hours you will be allowed to start mobilizing slowly. Depending on your surgery and the location of your incisions, stretching will be important to help regain your range of motion and ensure your scars do not become too stiff.

Lower limb bypass surgery requires harvesting one of your own veins from your arm or leg, or the use of a synthetic vein. Depending on your surgery, you may have:

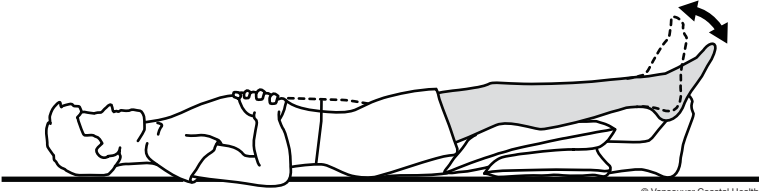
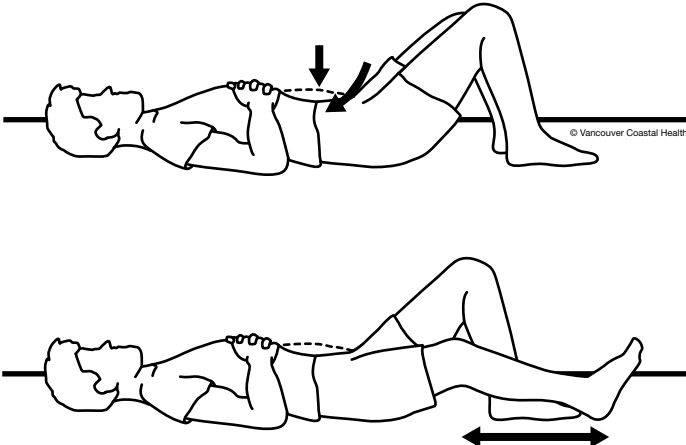
1. An incision on the inner thigh to just above the knee.
2. An incision on one arm, as well as an incision in the inner thigh.
3. An incision running from the inner thigh to below the knee.

When an incision crosses the joint, it is especially important to stretch and move the knee to ensure the scar tissue doesn't limit the mobility in the future.

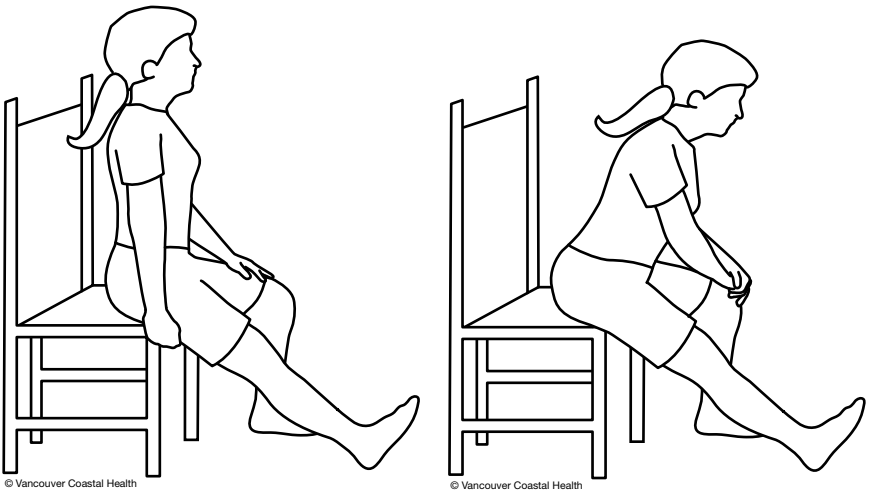
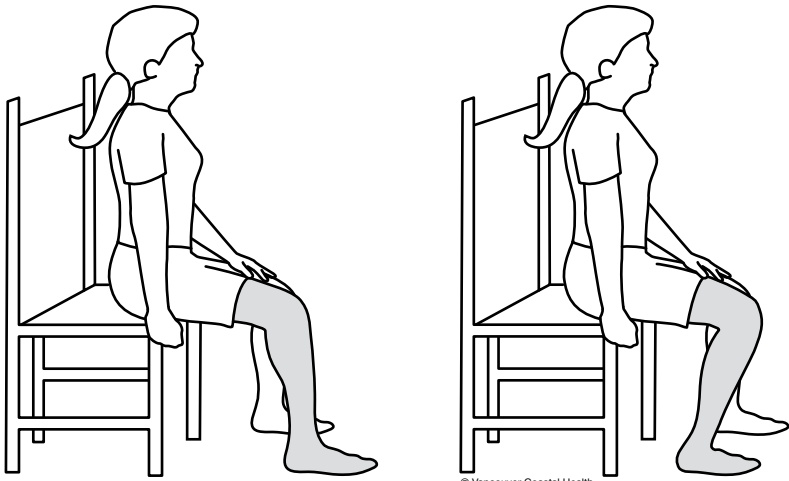
Exercises

The following exercises will help maintain range of motion and prevent stiffness after surgery. Start gently and work within your pain-free range. It is normal to have some discomfort with these exercises, but if you are experiencing significant pain, stop and consult your physiotherapist before continuing.

Do each exercise 10 times, 3 times per day. Hold each repetition for 2-3 seconds, gradually trying to increase the stretch with each repetition.

<p>1. Ankle pumps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Find a comfortable position lying on your back.» Pull your toes up towards you, bending at the ankle.» Point your toes downwards, straightening your ankle.	
<p>2. Heel slides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Find a comfortable position lying on your back.» On the affected leg, gently slide your heel toward you, bending at the knee.» Slowly return the leg to the starting position, knee straight.	

Do each exercise 10 times, 3 times per day. Hold each repetition for 5-10 seconds, gradually trying to increase the stretch with each repetition.

<p>3. Knee extension, weightbearing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Sit at the edge of the bed or chair, with your affected leg straight in front of you and heel resting on the ground.» Gently bend forward at the hips, keeping the knee as straight as possible.» Increase the stretch by pointing the toes upwards	
<p>4. Knee flexion, weightbearing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Sit at the edge of the bed or chair, with your affected leg bent and foot flat on the ground.» Gently bend the knee, sliding the foot back and keeping the heel flat on the ground, providing light pressure through the top of the knee with your hands.» If you have difficulty bending the knee, you can assist by hooking the opposite foot in front of your leg to pull back further.	

Initially after surgery, you may have increased pain or swelling when your leg is in a downward position. If this occurs during your exercises, stop and return to lying flat with your leg elevated for a few minutes. The first day after your surgery, it is best to only keep your leg in a downward position for 10 minutes at a time. Gradually increase this duration over the following days.

Walking

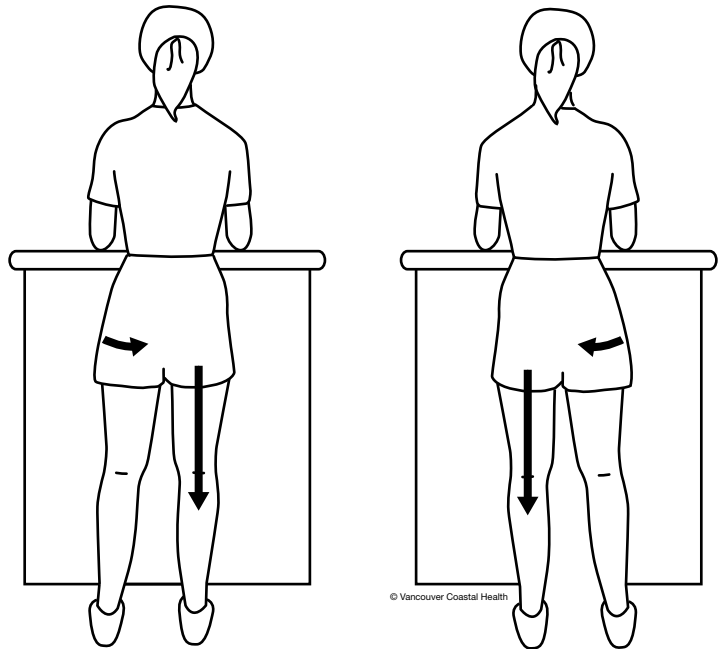
A physiotherapist will assist you with walking and exercise after surgery. As your pain and range of motion improve, you should gradually start to walk more to improve your strength and endurance. Start off with walking 3 times per day for short distances (20-30 metres) and gradually increase the frequency and duration of walking. If you experience increased pain or swelling while walking, stop and rest.

If you are continuing to have trouble walking 5-7 days after surgery, your physiotherapist may recommend additional exercises or prescribe you with a temporary walking aid upon discharge home.

Additional Exercises

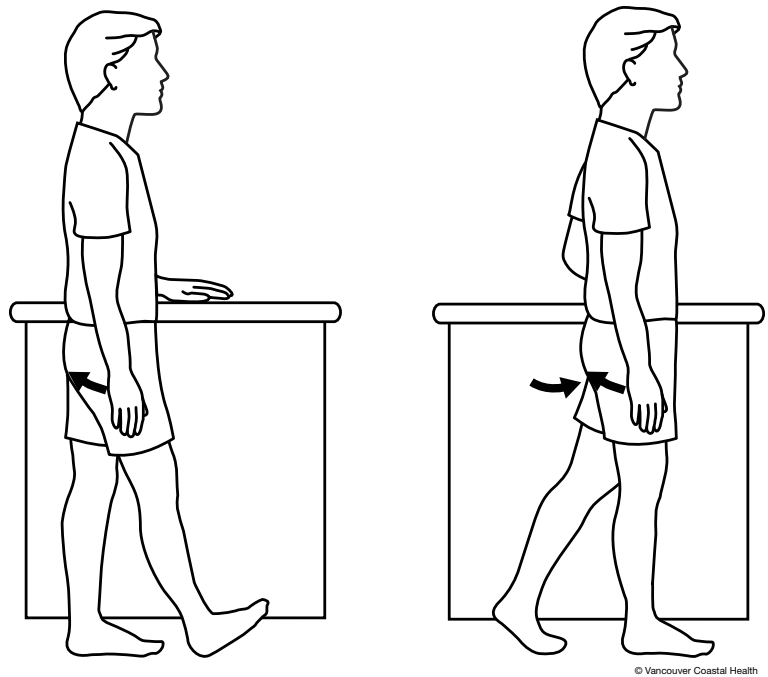
5. Lateral weight shifting, standing

- » In standing, holding onto a counter or other stable surface, place your feet shoulder width apart
- » While keeping both feet on the ground, shift your body weight to the right leg and hold for 5 seconds
- » Repeat on the other side by shifting your body weight to the left leg and hold for 5 seconds.



6. Heel-toe stride, standing

- » Standing near a stable surface such as a countertop, stagger your feet so that your right foot is in front of your left.
- » Lift your right toes off of the ground, shifting your weight into your right heel and left foot.
- » Then, shift your weight forward onto your right leg and lift your left heel off of the ground.
- » Continue shifting your weight backward and forward 10 times.
- » Repeat this exercise again with your left leg in front.



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