

# Information and exercises following a gamma nail

## Introduction

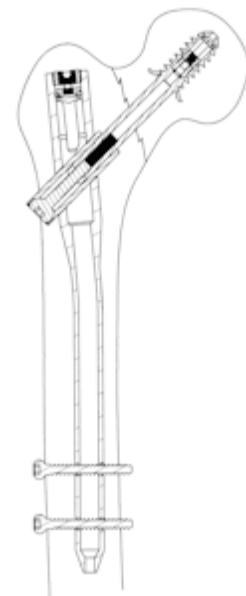
A gamma nail is performed where the neck of femur has been fractured and where there is a good chance that it will heal if held in place by internal fixation.

The gamma nail consists of a large screw placed in the head of the femur and a nail which goes down the centre of the shaft of femur. This metal work will remain in place permanently even once the fracture has healed.

Following your operation you will be encouraged to mobilise as soon as possible and you must make sure that you are receiving adequate pain relief to allow you to do this. You should be sat out of bed the day after the operation with assistance and a walking aid. Your doctor or physiotherapist will advise you of how much weight you can take through your operated leg, usually full weight, although this may initially be limited by pain.

Mobility will be progressed during your admission with the physiotherapist. He/she will advise you on how far you should be mobilising and what walking aids are appropriate for you (usually a walking frame initially and then progressing to crutches if able).

It is also important that you carry out some exercises to strengthen the muscles around the damaged hip these are listed on the following pages. Your physiotherapist may advise you of additional exercises that may also benefit you.



## Exercises

The following exercises need to be done regularly throughout the day to reduce the risk of chest infection and blood clots in the calf. You should start these exercises as soon as possible after you operation.

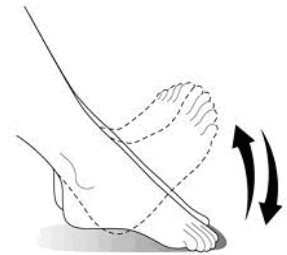
### 1) Deep breathing

Breathe in through the nose.

Hold for 2-3 seconds.

Breathe out through the mouth.

Do 3 or 4 deep breaths, then relax.



### 2) Circulatory exercises - ankle pumps

Point and bend your ankles, a minimum of ten times.

**The following exercises should be started the day after your surgery and should be done 10 times each, four times a day with each leg. Your physiotherapist will help explain how to do them.**

### 1) Static quads

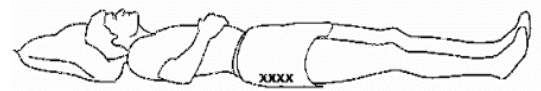
Lying with your legs out straight in front of you, tighten the muscles on the front of your thigh by squashing your knee down in to the bed and pulling your toes up towards you.

Hold for a count of 5, relax completely.



### 2) Gluteal squeeze

Squeeze your buttock muscles together as tightly as possible for a count of 5, relax completely.



### 3) Hip flexion/ Heel slide

Lying with your legs out straight in front of you, slide the heel of your operated leg up towards your bottom, allowing your hip and knee to bend.

Do not let your hip bend more than a right angle.

Slide your heel back down again, relax completely.



#### 4) Hip abduction

Lying with your legs out straight in front of you, keeping both legs straight and your toes pointing towards the ceiling throughout, move your operated leg out to the side slowly. Return your leg to the start position, relax completely.



#### 5) Long arc quadriceps

In your chair, kick your foot forward and straighten your operated leg slowly, hold for 5 seconds and slowly lower back down. Relax completely.



**Once you are mobile with a frame or crutches you can progress to the following exercises. Make sure you are holding onto a firm surface for all standing exercises. Again, you should be doing 10 of each exercise, four times a day.**

#### 6) Hip flexion

Slowly lift the knee of your operated leg towards your chest. Lower your foot back down, relax completely.



#### 7) Hip extension

Keeping your body upright throughout the exercise, slowly move your operated leg as far back as possible, return to the starting position, relax completely.



#### 8) Hip abduction

Keeping your body upright throughout the exercise, slowly move your operated leg out to the side, keeping your toes pointing forwards. Return to the starting position, relax completely.



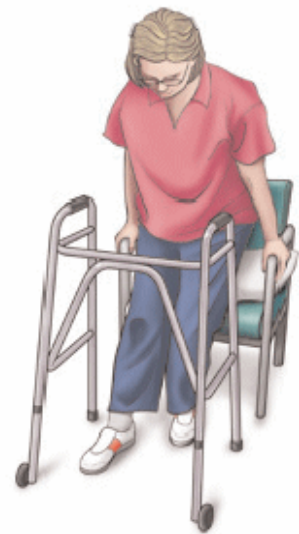
#### 9) Hip hitching

Keeping your body upright, your feet together and your legs straight, shorten one leg to lift the foot. Repeat on the other side, relax completely.

## Mobility/Walking

### **Standing to use your frame**

- Shuffle your bottom to the front of the chair.
- Tuck your feet back underneath you.
- Use the arms of the chair to push up from.
- If it is painful, move the operated leg forwards prior to standing so that more weight is taken on the non-operated leg.
- Once you have your balance reach for your frame.



### **Sitting down**

- Your chair must be high enough so that your knee is lower than your hip.
- Stand close enough to feel the chair against the back of your legs.
- Let go of the frame and reach back to the arms of the chair.
- Slide your operated leg forwards.
- Gently lower yourself in to the chair.

### **Walking with a frame**

- Move the frame first.
- Then step the operated leg forward.
- Push down through the frame and step forward with your non-operated leg.

### **Points to aim for when walking**

- Make sure that both steps are equal in length.
- Try to spend the same amount of time on each leg.
- Always put the heel of each foot to the ground first.
- Gradually increase your walking distance and amount of activity that you do each day.

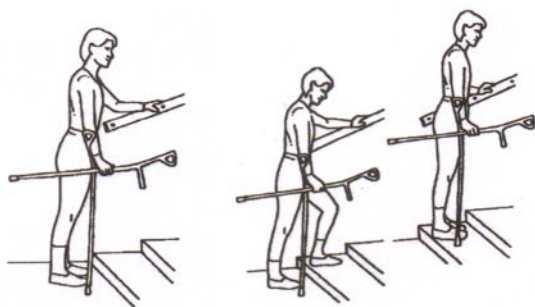
### **Stairs**

Your physiotherapist will practice stairs/steps with you prior to discharge if necessary. You may need to use a stick or crutches on the stairs if you only

have one or no rails. You may also need to have extra frame/ crutches/sticks to enable you to have something to walk with when you reach the top of the stairs.

## Ascending

- Hold on to your rail/rails.
- Step up with your unoperated leg first, then your operated leg.
- Followed by your stick or crutches.

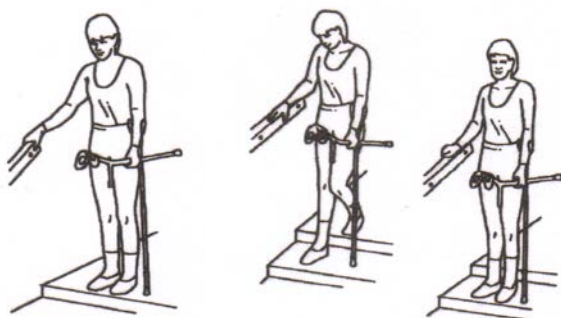


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## Descending

- Hold on to your rail/rails.
- Place your crutches or stick down one step.
- Step down with the operated leg first, follow with the unoperated leg.



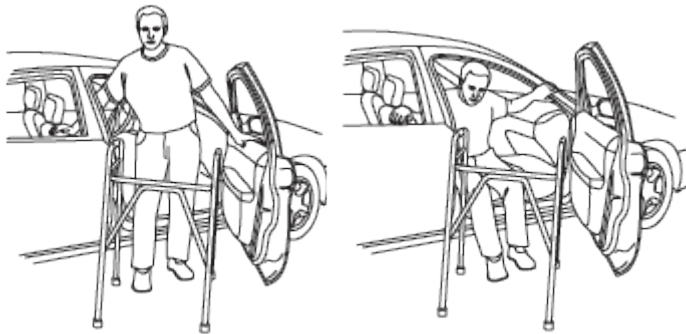
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## Getting in/out of the car

- Positioning the car: you should sit in the front passenger seat of the car after your operation as there is more leg room. Make sure the car is parked away from the kerb, so you can be on the same level as the car before you try to get in.

- Push the seat back as far as possible and slightly reclined. Go bottom first into the car and lower yourself slowly to the edge of the seat. Use your arms and lift your bottom further across the seat towards the driver's side. Lift your legs into the car slowly.
- A plastic bag will help you swivel your legs in more slowly, but must be removed before you drive off.
- Reverse this procedure to get out.



## Pain

After your operation some pain may persist for a further few weeks and you should use this as a guide when increasing your daily activities. A moderate ache which settles quickly is acceptable, severe pain which takes hours to settle is not. If you experience sharp pain, stop activity immediately. If symptoms persist contact your GP for advice.

If the area around the wound becomes red, increasingly more painful, discharges pus or you become unwell with a high temperature, contact your GP immediately.

## Swelling

The swelling in the leg may remain for as long as three months. Having a rest period on the bed with the legs elevated (raised up) for a few hours a day will help control the swelling.

## Driving

- Don't drive until your doctor says you are fit enough. This is normally six weeks after the operation.

- In order to drive you need to be nearly pain free, not be dependent on walking aids, have a good range of movement and have sufficient reflexes to manage an emergency stop.
- Remember to have a “test drive” and practice an emergency stop with an experienced driver.

## Work

Check with your GP when you can go back to work. If you have a desk job you will be able to return sooner than if you have a very active job.

## Sex

You should be the passive partner whilst you are recovering.

## General advice

- Do have regular rest periods each day.
- An increased ache in the hip region usually means that your level of activity has increased.
- If you experience a sharp pain, stop activity immediately.
- If symptoms persist, contact your GP for advice.
- Aim to be as active as you can within the limits of pain.

## Discharge

When the ward team feels you are ready, you will be discharged, either home or to a further rehabilitation centre. Before leaving, your physiotherapist should discuss with you which exercises to continue at home and how to progress your mobility.

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This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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