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TREADMILL PROGRAM

Walking on a treadmill can begin as early as one week post-op for arthroscopies, two weeks post-op for ACL’s, and three weeks post op for TKR’s. As always, check with your doctor or therapist for a timeline that suits your situation.

A treadmill allows you to adjust the speed and incline of the surface. Thus in this controlled environment, you can retrain your muscles to smooth out your gait. For example, this is the time to practice pointing your feet in the direction you’re walking- not the Charlie Chaplin thing you’ve gotten into the habit of with your sore knee. In the process, you gain balance, coordination, and strength. Finally, the treadmill can help you build endurance as you increase the intensity of your program. As always, make sure you are familiar with how your particular machine works.

Increase your strength initially by walking uphill rather than speed walking. Similarly, begin a jog progression with a slight incline to decrease the stress on the knee that comes with flat or downhill running. Be patient, and you will be running outside pain free in due time!

- Speed: Slow = 2.0 – 3.5 mph, Medium = 4.0 – 5.5 mph, Fast = 6.0+mph
- Incline: Flat = 0.0%, Low = 3.0-5.0%, Medium = 5.5 – 10.0%, High = 10.5-15.0%

LEVEL A:

PURPOSE	Improve gait, balance and coordination	
PROTOCOL	Activity Slow speed /flat Break for ROM stretching Slow speed /flat	Time 5 min 5 min 5 min TOTAL = 15 min.
COMMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work on a smooth gait in this controlled environment.• Maintain an upright posture- think “5-Star General”	

LEVEL B:

PURPOSE	Light strength & endurance - Regain your sanity	
PROTOCOL	Activity Med speed /low incline Med speed /med incline Repeat 2 more times	Time 3 min 3 min TOTAL = 18 min.
COMMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The incline will strengthen the leg and thigh muscles. • No limping allowed! • Swing arms to assume a normal gait. • Stretch calf, quads and hams well after workout. 	

LEVEL C:

PURPOSE	Aerobic training when Level B is comfortable and easy. You are still walking!	
PROTOCOL	Activity Medium Speed / Low Incline Medium Speed / Medium Incline Fast Speed / Low Incline Fast Speed / Medium Incline Fast Speed / Low Incline Medium Speed / Low Incline	Time 5 min 5 min 5 min 5 min 5 min 5 min TOTAL= 30 min.
COMMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Medium” and “Fast” have been “ballparked” above, but don’t be afraid to make some adjustments. The important thing is to change speeds and feel smooth. • The “Return to Running” Program in Chapter 12 assumes you have completed a program similar to this first. • Proper cool down – Always! 	