



Bunionectomy

If you've recently had a bunionectomy, you know your toes and maybe even your ankle are stiff from lack of normal movement. You may even have swelling, pain, and a limp.

Your balance on that leg may feel just a little impaired. With the right footwear, use of ice, and therapeutic exercises you should be "back on your feet" in a reasonable period of time. This packet includes some helpful hints and exercises that should assist you in your recovery.

Do's

- Use ice, commercial cold packs, or frozen peas to treat the inflammation (10-15 minutes of application - every hour for severe cases, 3 times per day for even mild cases).
- Wear supportive footwear such as a good walking, hiking, or athletic shoe.
- Elevate leg as often as possible if the foot is prone to swelling.
- If you still have a wound (one that is still seeping or draining) please keep it covered with a sterile dressing.
- If your wounds are all healed, do some gentle massage a few minutes each day to soften the scar and improve its mobility (your therapist will show you how).
- Do your stretching exercises as prescribed. It is better to do them more frequently versus more aggressively. Pain that lasts for hours after you stretch is a sign you are stretching too hard. Infrequent but aggressive stretching usually results in more inflammation and thus more scar tissue that makes the joint tighter.
- Stretch before getting out of bed so that the first few steps are not as stressful to the healing joints.

Don'ts

- Do not wear tightly fitting shoes that cause any red marks on your foot, especially at the wound or scar site.
- Avoid shoes with any more than a minimal heel height.
- Cause no more than mild pain when stretching your toes. A good pulling or stretch feeling should be felt.
- Remember not to overdo walking when you are still healing and stiff. Signs of overdoing it may include increased pain, swelling, redness, and warmth of the toes and foot. Limping is also a bad sign.
- Try to avoid limping, especially if it is just a habit that you learned during the initial post operative period. If you cannot stop limping because of pain, then you may need at least one crutch. If it is because of fatigue, then rest. Limping often results in other aches and pains such as in the opposite hip and/or the low back.