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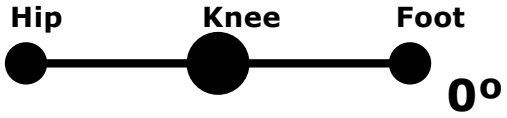
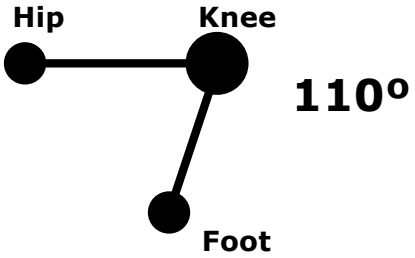
Important Instructions about Regaining Motion after Total Knee Replacement

Following a total knee replacement, regaining motion of the knee is most important.

Usually the first 6 weeks of physical therapy is done at home, with a therapist coming to you. The next 6 weeks of therapy is done at a PT facility as an outpatient. The average range of motion that patients can achieve is 120°. In order to function well, the knee should fully extend to 0° (fully straight) and bend to at least 110° (more than a right angle).





This motion must be obtained during the first 4-6 weeks!

If not, then "manipulation" may be recommended. You return to the hospital and are given an anesthetic. I bend the knee for you, stretching the scar tissue. **No open surgery is necessary.** You may go home the same day and you must arrange for use of a CPM machine at home for about 10 days afterwards. Physical therapy must begin again immediately. Manipulation is rarely necessary (2 patients out of 100) but it is successful in "jump-starting" your therapy and improving your motion…as long as you work hard to keep the range of motion we obtained after the manipulation.

The Bottom Line: Work hard in therapy for the first 6 weeks to get the most motion possible. Ask your therapist in the hospital and at home whether you are close to these goals and keep track of your progress. Remember your range of motion (how much you extend/straighten and how much you flex/bend) so that you can tell us in the office.

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