Acute Care for Knee Injuries

1. **Rest**: You should keep off of the sore knee, using crutches as needed for walking.

2. **Ice**: Apply a cold pack, placed in a pillowcase, to the swollen area for 15-20 minutes, 4-6 times per day. Or, for more direct cold therapy, massage the painful area with an ice cube for 5-10 minutes (until numb and red). Elevate the knee while you are applying ice.

3. **Compression**: Compression should be snug, but comfortable. You should remove it at night. **Ace Wrap**: starting at the mid shin, wrap in a circular pattern towards the thigh, covering all areas of the knee.

4. **Elevation**: Keep the knee elevated above the level of your heart as often as possible to help with the pain and swelling, taking care to support the back of the knee. Elevate while you sleep at night by placing a pillow under your knee.

5. **Crutches**: Crutches may be rented for a small weekly fee in the Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine Clinic. Crutches may be necessary to help you maintain a pain-free gait without a limp. Your clinician can help you determine if this is necessary.

6. **Bracing**: Your doctor or therapist will determine if a brace is necessary and instruct you in use.
Exercises for Acute Knee Injuries

1. **Quad Sets**: Tighten your thigh muscle and hold for 10 seconds. Do not hyperextend your knee and make sure that the muscle just above your knee on the inside of your thigh is contracting fully. If needed, place a towel roll under your knee to provide support to the knee. Repeat 10-20 times, 4-6 times per day.

2. **Hamstring Sets**: Lie on your back. Bend your knee slightly with your heel pressing into the bed. Dig your heel into the bed to tighten your hamstring. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 10-20 times, 4-6 times per day.

3. **Straight Leg Raise**: Lie on your back, with your uninjured knee bent and foot flat. Pull in your abdominal muscles and hold. Tighten your quads (thigh muscle) on the injured knee and without letting your knee bend, lift it 5-10 inches off the ground. Hold in the air 3-5 seconds as tolerated and then lower slowly. Do 10-20 repetitions, 4-6 times per day.

4. **Range of Motion**: Straighten and bend your knee by sliding your heel towards your buttocks. If needed you can loop a towel or strap around the ball of your foot holding on to each end with your hands to assist the motion. Do not push through pain. Do this 4-6 times per day, 10-20 repetitions.

5. **Side Leg Lifts (Abduction)**: Lie on your uninjured side. Bend your bottom knee for balance. Keep your injured knee straight and in line with your body. Tighten your abdominal muscles and slowly raise and lower the top leg. 10-20 repetitions, 4-6 times per day.

6. **Hip Extension**: Lie on your stomach. Pull in abdominal muscles. Keep your injured leg straight and lift it 3-5 inches. Hold 3-5 seconds. Slowly lower. Do 10-20 repetitions. 4-6 times per day.

7. **Side Leg Lifts (Adduction)**: Lie on your injured side. Bend your top knee and rest it on a pillow in front of your body. Keep your injured knee straight. Tighten your abdominal muscles and slowly raise the bottom leg 2-3 inches then lower. Do 10-20 reps, 4-6 times per day.