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## **POST OPERATIVE BUNION THERAPY INSTRUCTIONS**

Approximately four or five weeks after your Bunion surgery, it is important to begin therapy exercises on your foot. Most therapy for Bunion surgery can be performed by the patient, without going to a physical therapist.

One of the most important parts of successful Bunion surgery is performing the proper exercises afterwards. Since surgery is performed on a joint, joint stiffness is always a concern. Initially, most joints will be stiff. This is normal. However, almost always, this is temporary, and performing your exercises will increase the motion of the joint quickly. One of the reasons why patients sometimes are hesitant to perform their exercises is because it may be uncomfortable. This is almost always the case initially. However, after a few sessions, the pain reduces considerably as the exercises are performed. In fact, if you have no pain while performing your therapy, you are probably not doing it correctly and should ask Dr. Kashan or Dr. Carter about it.

Here are some simple therapy exercises we advise for all of our postoperative bunion patients.

Instead of rubbing lotion on your foot and incision as you have been doing since the stitches were removed, it is now important to firmly massage the lotion into the incision from side to side. **Do this by using two hands and pushing the sides of the incision together along the entire length of the incision. Do it hard, like you are popping bubble paper.** Using lotion makes this easier to do. The goal of this is to have the incision lift up as if you would be pinching the skin. Initially, everything is stuck together and you will not be able to pinch it very much. After pinching it for several days, you will begin to see improvement. This also makes your scar look better.

**Place a pencil or pen on the floor and try to pick it up with toes.** You will probably not be able to do so. However, the gripping exercise of trying to pick it up will strengthen the muscles in your toe. You will be surprised how quickly you are able to bend your toe and strengthen it.

**You also must bend your toe upwards. Just trying to move it is not enough. You actually must use your hands to bend the toe past the point where it wants to stop.** You will feel discomfort when you do this. Use two fingers and grab the toe from the base. Do not grab it from the tip. Then, bend the toe upwards until you feel some discomfort. Try to go slightly more. Hold it here for about 5 seconds. Then relax. Try to do this for about five minutes. This is probably one of the most important things you can do after Bunion surgery. If you do not do this, you have a better chance of having a stiff joint.

**The first shoe that you will be wearing is a Man's tennis shoe.** Men's shoes are cut wider than women's. So, if you got a larger women's shoe, it would not be wide enough. Most tennis shoes look the same whether they are man's or woman's shoe. Therefore, appearance should not be a concern. **Purchase an inexpensive pair which you are able to get on your foot easily.** Do not be concerned with the size. It doesn't matter. As long as you can get your foot in comfortably, that is what you should look for. Try wearing the shoe. Don't be surprised if you can only wear it for a few minutes before having to take it off. Continue to try to wear the shoe, changing off with the surgical shoe whenever possible. Eventually, you will find that you are in the tennis shoe more and the surgical shoe less. Also, wearing the tennis shoe allows your foot to bend, which functions as an additional therapy exercise.

Our main concern is your successful healing, fast recuperation, and excellent results. These tips are designed to help you obtain the best possible result as quickly as possible. Please feel free to ask Dr. Kashan or Dr. Carter any questions you may have.