



Post-Operative Exercises Following 1st Toe Surgery



Anyone who has had 1st toe surgery e.g. bunion correction, bump removal or joint implant will need to do regular exercises with the 1st toe to make sure it remains as flexible as possible and to strengthen it again. The importance of these exercises cannot be overstated as they will help your whole foot to function better in the future. Joint stiffness is a risk of any joint surgery.

Please persevere with the exercises. At first, they may be a little uncomfortable however it is worth it as things will get easier over time.

Over the first 6 weeks or so you should do these exercises little and often through the day, at least 4 times a day. As time goes on and you get back to normal activities you will find you will not do them as often but do try to set some time aside each day for a few exercises.

1. Exercise to improve the movement of the big toe:

This exercise can be done sitting down to begin with and you can then progress to standing up and putting more force through the toe after a while.

Without shoes, place your operated foot flat on the floor then lift your heel so that the toes bend against the ground. Make sure it is your big toe that bends, try to focus on making the 1st toe do the work.

Hold this position for a count of 10. Then repeat it 10 times.

Repeat this set of exercises about 4 times per day.

As your foot becomes more comfortable and you are returning to normal walking, increase the length of your stride. This will also help to improve the movement in the joint.

2. Exercise to regain strength in the big toe:

It is best to sit with your leg up on a sofa or bed to do this exercise and use the elastic (TheraBand) that you are given.

Sit with your foot at 90° to your leg, then loop the middle of the elastic strip around the big toe holding both ends towards you. Pull gently on the elastic to apply some tension but don't overdo it when you first start.

Now scrunch or press your big toe away from you to stretch the elastic (again focus on making the 1st toe do the work).

Hold this toe position for a count of 5 then relax. Repeat it 10 times.

Pull a fraction tighter on the elastic and repeat the same scrunch 10 times, holding it each time.

And again, pull a fraction tighter still and repeat the scrunch 5 times, holding it each time.

Repeat this set of exercises about 4 times per day. You can gradually pull the elastic tighter as your toe strength improves over time.



3. Alternative exercise to regain strength in the big toe

Once you are becoming busier, and maybe back at work after approx... 6-8 weeks, it can be challenging to stop regularly to complete your TheraBand exercises.

There is an alternative way to help strengthen your toe without having to take off your shoe during the day. You can do this at any time whilst getting on with other things.

First, imagine there is a sheet of paper on the floor. Then imagine your big toe is on one corner and someone is pulling the paper from the opposite corner. Press your big toe down to hold the 'paper' still and prevent it being pulled away, you should be able to feel the strength of the toe pressing downwards to the floor.

Hold this toe position for a count of 5 then relax.

Repeat as often as you are able to.

Whenever possible during the day, press your toe down like this to continue the strengthening process. You can do this exercise whilst standing, for example, in the supermarket queue, at the bus stop, at the ironing board or kitchen sink — or wherever you are.

Useful numbers

Baddow Hospital

01245 671181

Baddow Emergency Contact Nurse

07591 977965