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THIGH LIFT INSTRUCTION 180 & 360 DEGREES

BEFORE SURGERY

PRELIMINARY

1. Smokers should stop 2 weeks before surgery and for 2 weeks after surgery. This will not only help reduce coughing and possible bleeding, it greatly improves wound healing and increases the change of graft survival.
2. Report any signs of a cold, infection, boils or pustules appearing 2 weeks before surgery.
3. You must have a responsible adult pick you up after surgery. Arrange to have someone stay with you for the first 24 hours.

DAY OF SURGERY

1. Do not take medication of any kind unless instructed by your doctor.
2. Nothing to eat or drink (6) hours before surgery, this includes the antibiotic pill. If your surgery is in the afternoon, you may have toast or juice if taken at least 6 hours before surgery.
3. Wear comfortable, loose fitting clothes like a front button up top or dress that does not have to pull over the head. No pantyhose or jeans please.
4. Leave all valuables at home – this includes money, jewelry, handbags and watches.
5. You must have someone drive for you after surgery. On arrival to the office, give the front desk your driver's name and phone number as well as the address and phone number you will be the night after surgery.
6. You must have someone spend the first 2 days with you. Additional instructions and prescriptions can be given to the person with you. Such prescriptions should be filled promptly.

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7. Shower with an anti-bacterial soap before surgery. Also, please shave your legs and your total groin area (everything).
8. If you have questions before surgery, please call our office.

AFTER THE SURGERY

1. Take medications according to the instruction on the bottle. If pain medications make you feel drowsy, have someone else give your medicines according to the proper time intervals. Under such circumstances, you could forget and take them too often. Pain medications should be taken 20 minutes after a full meal, solid food, not just soup. Taking pain medications on an empty stomach can cause nausea and may lead to vomiting.
2. Do not self-medicate with your own painkillers, sleeping pills, muscle relaxants or narcotics. Only take those medications prescribed by your treating physician after surgery. Self-medicating could lead to drug toxicity or death.
3. Remain in bed until you are alert with bathroom privileges. Ambulation can be done as tolerated then. You may need assistance initially, particularly to guard against dizziness and possible fainting.
4. Avoid smoking for 2 weeks after surgery to promote wound healing as well as prevent coughing and possible bleeding.
5. **No alcohol for 5 days after surgery.**
6. You can expect:
 - a) Moderate discomfort – use pain medications as directed.
 - b) Moderate swelling – worst days are usually the 2nd and 3rd day.
 - c) Variable black and blue discoloration.

ALL OF THESE PROBLEMS ARE USUALLY THE WORST THE DAY AFTER SURGERY.
7. Call (760)837-0364 if you have:
 - a) Any pain in your calves or shortness of breath.
 - b) Severe pain not responding to pain medication.
 - c) Marked swelling on one side more than the other.
 - d) If any other questions or problems arise.
8. Avoid prolonged exposure to the sun and heat as well as vigorous physical activities for 3 weeks.
9. The compression garment is to be worn 24-48 hours until removed by the doctor at your next day post op visit. DO NOT take it off to bathe. You may continue to wear it afterwards as it may provide added comfort and further reduce swelling.

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10. You may shower or bathe once the compression garment has been removed by the doctor. Until then, sponge bathes as necessary. After showering, apply dry-clean gauze around the wound where the drains are, this will keep the area nice and clean and free from bacteria formation.
11. When sleeping, make sure you use a few pillows under your head and upper back as well as under your knees to help your body flex at the hips.

OFFICE VISITS

- FIRST:** Usually seen 1-2 days after surgery to check drains, wounds, and calves.
- SECOND:** 1 week to 14 days for Suture Removal.
(the steri-strips over the incision site will be changed on a weekly basis for the next weeks to minimize tension on the wound, thus promoting a well healed scar).

Physician will determine additional visits.

ACTIVITY LEVEL

Start out eating something light after surgery (i.e., soup and toast, etc.). Showering but not bathing is permitted after 4 days, even with drains in place. Activity is generally limited to bed rest for the first 48 hours, however you may get up to use the bathroom or walk to the kitchen. Light ambulation with assistance is encouraged even on the first day. Your body's position in bed should be semi-flexed to take the tension off the suture line. You can use several pillows to prop your back and one or two under your knees to lift your thighs. Elevation of the legs is often helpful as well. It is important that you flex and extend (bend and kick) your knee joint for at least 5 minutes every hour while you are awake. This will promote venous return in your legs and help reduce swelling. If you do not do this, it is possible though very uncommon, for the blood in your veins to clot at your legs and possibly dislodge causing a pulmonary embolism. Simple exercise, as described, will prevent this. If you have any pain in your calves, call the office immediately.

The second week you may do some light stretching exercise. After the third week, you may resume walking and the stationary biking without overheating. Normal activities are resumed **slowly** while vigorous activities are restricted until the 6th week after surgery. Elevate your feet if there is ankle swelling. Avoid salty foods that will add to swelling. Though you might feel comfortable moving about, even the first day after surgery, movement should be done cautiously to prevent any stress on your incisions. Listen to your body. It is normal to feel tired while you are healing from this type of operation. Occasionally you will feel fine and be quite active only to find yourself fatigued the next day. Your body is going through a significant healing process so good nutrition and reasonable activity is important for an optimal recovery.

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One of the most important parts of your recovery is to keep your drains clean. This process is called "stripping" your drains. The staff will instruct you on how to do this. Once at home, you will have to keep the drains free of blood and clots by "stripping" it, up to 6 times per day.

THIGH LIFT RECOVERY PROCESS

The next visit will be at 10-12 days after your surgery. At this time, your doctor will re-assess your incisions and verify that appropriate healing is taking place. Non-absorbable stitches along your inner thighs will be removed. Your thighs will feel "tight" and will be swollen. Most of the swelling should be gone by the sixth week after surgery. Individuals with desk type employment may resume work in two weeks. Lifting should be limited to 25lbs. for four weeks. Others with work involving prolonged periods of standing, walking or heavy lifting may need to wait for three to six weeks. Vigorous activities or aerobic exercise should not be resumed for six weeks.

The scars will tend to become increasingly red after two weeks and begin to fade after two to three months. The scars will never completely disappear and will take from 12-18 months to reach their final appearance. We emphasize the importance of minimizing the sun exposure to the scars, especially while they are still red. If sun exposure is to occur during this time, a sun block rating of 30 or greater should be applied to the incisions.

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