

Exercising After Bunion Surgery

Stiffening of the big toe joint after bunion surgery can best be prevented by performing daily stretching and range-of-motion exercises at this joint. Range-of-motion exercises are important to achieve the best results after surgery.

Range of motion therapy will:

- Help prevent stiffness at the big toe joint.
- Help prevent painful adhesions (scarring).
- Aid in a more expedient recovery.
- Increase shoe style alternatives (easier to wear high-heeled shoes).

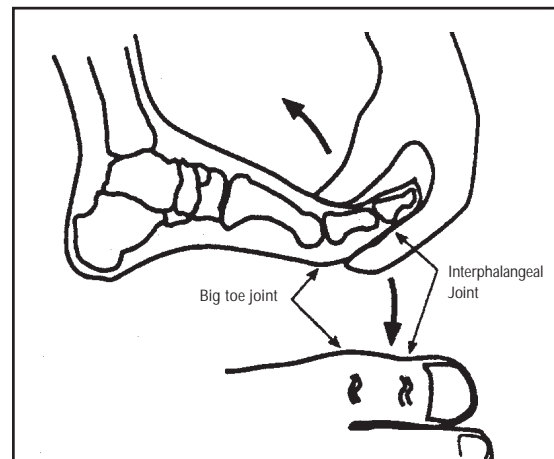
This very important part of the recovery process depends on your willingness and attention. If during your recovery you are having difficulty performing your exercises, please consult your physician.

First and Second Weeks

Rest and elevation. No exercises are necessary during this period.

Third and Fourth Weeks

Begin mild, assisted range-of-motion exercises. Grasp the big toe near the base of the toe close to the big toe joint. Do not mistake the big toe joint for the interphalangeal joint. The interphalangeal joint is the joint in the middle of the big toe, closest to the toenail. Gently flex the toe upward until resistance is met and mild discomfort is experienced. Then hold for approximately 10 seconds. Perform this 3 times; then flex the toe downward in the same maneuver for 3 sets of 10 seconds each. This series of exercises should be performed 3 times a day during the third and fourth weeks.

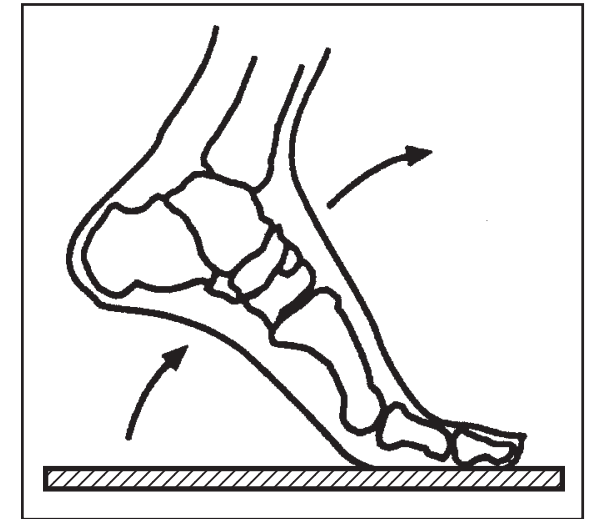


Fifth and Sixth Weeks

During this period the same manually assisted range-of-motion exercises should be increased to approximately 6 times per day with a gradual increase in vigor and force applied to the toe each day as tolerated.

The Seventh Week

Begin gravity assisted and weight-bearing exercise programs. This is performed by lifting the heel up, keeping the big toe on the ground and using body weight to force flexion at the toe. Stand on the toes for approximately 10 seconds at a time as tolerated. Walking uphill to force flexion of the toe, and walking up steps can be excellent exercises to increase the flexibility in the big toe joint.



In addition, you may also implement the distraction and manipulation stretching program described on the following page.

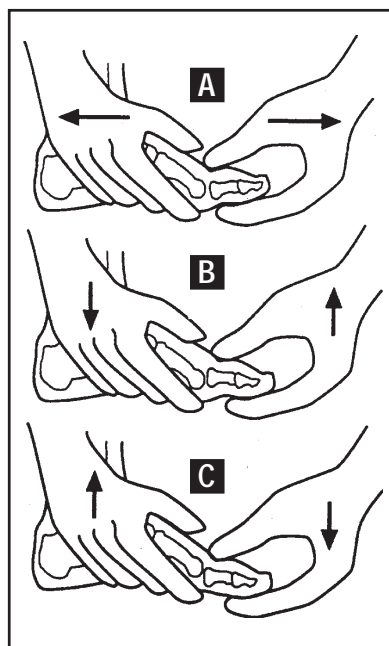
Distraction and Manipulation Exercise

Grasp the forefoot with one hand just behind the big toe joint with the thumb on the top of the foot. With the other hand, grasp the big toe at the base close to the big toe joint. First distract the big toe as the arrows illustrate in figure A. Then, while stabilizing the forefoot with the thumb of the first hand (figure B), push the big toe upward with the second hand without bending the toe (keep toe straight). Hold for approximately 10

seconds and repeat 3 times.

Perform the same maneuver by pushing the big toe downward, keeping the toe straight as illustrated in figure C.

Hold for approximately 10 seconds and repeat 3 times. This exercise regimen should be done approximately 6 times a day in addition to the range-of-motion exercises.



It is important to keep in mind that postoperative swelling can persist for 6 months or longer after bunion surgery, and the ability to wear tight shoes or fashionable women's shoes is very difficult when swelling and stiffness are present.

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The information presented here is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of professional medical care. If you have persistent health problems or if you have further questions, please consult your health care provider.

The banner is a vertical rectangular graphic. At the top, it says 'FOOT CARE' in a simple font. Below that, the title 'Exercising After Bunion Surgery' is written in a large, bold, serif font. Underneath the title is the Kaiser Permanente logo, which consists of a stylized sunburst or fan shape above the words 'KAISER PERMANENTE'. The background of the banner is dark with a light-colored, dotted pattern at the top and bottom. On the right side, there are three white silhouettes of feet, one above the other. On the left side, there is a white line drawing of a hand holding a foot, with the thumb of the hand resting on the top of the foot.