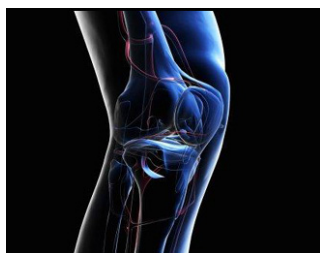


# Golden Hills

Orthopedic and Sports Physical Therapy

July 2006

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## Our Mission...

To further the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of movement dysfunction in order to enhance the physical health and functional abilities of our patients.

To maximize the patient's potential for regaining full physical health by providing rehabilitation through the use of advancements in physical therapy techniques and state-of-the-art equipment.

To establish a self-management program for the patient through education and a personalized home exercise program for each individual to enable the patient to maintain their physical health at home and at work.

## Treatment for All Types of Knee Injuries

Golden Hills specializes in treating knee injuries in athletes, children and the elderly. Call us for more information!

**(408) 274-0888**

## Preventing and Treating Injuries to the Knee

The June issue of *Golden Hills News* was the first in a special two-issue series on the prevention and treatment of knee injuries. In June, we focused on knee anatomy and the most common types of knee injuries. This month, we present information to help our referring physicians and other caregivers appreciate the pros and cons of both nonsurgical and surgical treatment options and encourage patients to make the choice that is right for their lifestyles and personal recovery goals.

### Deciding on a Course of Treatment

There are non-operative and surgical options, each with their unique advantages and disadvantages.

### Nonsurgical Rehabilitation (Physical Therapy)

Depending on the type of knee injury the patient presents with and his or her recovery goals, rehabilitative physical therapy may have certain advantages. Working with a physical therapist, the patient will participate in specific exercises designed to take his or her knee joint through its range of motion to prevent stiffness and scarring as the knee heals. The patient may also need to do regular exercises to strengthen the muscles surrounding the knee.

Nonsurgical rehabilitation should be

considered if:

- The patient's knee is stable during typical daily activities.
- The patient's knee cartilage hasn't been damaged.
- The patient has no desire to participate in future high-risk activities involving jumping, cutting and pivoting.

### What the Patient Can Expect

Patients may be able to continue with their daily activities by doing physical therapy exercises, changing their activities and possibly wearing a knee brace for activities that are of more moderate risk.

Some rehabilitative exercises can be done at home. Others require the use of weight machines, exercise bicycles or treadmills, which may require visits to an athletic club, fitness center or clinic. In the early stages of rehab, the patient works on reestablishing full range of motion in his or her knee. Then the patient progresses to knee-, hip- and ankle-strengthening exercises combined with training to improve stability and balance. Finally, the patient works on training specific to his or her sport or work activities, including exercises to help prevent further injury.

The patient will need to change his or

# Preventing and Treating Knee Injuries (Continued)

her activities to avoid high-risk sports that could further damage the knee. Patients should avoid activities that include jumping, cutting, pivoting, and sudden slowing down or stopping (deceleration), such as basketball, football and soccer. The patient may be able to do other activities, such as jogging, swimming and bicycling, without difficulty.

A nonsurgical rehabilitation program may be easier and less painful than the physical therapy that's needed after surgery. The patient can usually expect to be back to his or her normal daily activities within a month.

## Pros and Cons of Physical Therapy

### Pros:

- Addresses movement system impairments (MSIs), which are often the root cause of knee injuries.
- Patient avoids the risks commonly associated with any type of surgery.
- Rehabilitation may be easier and less painful than recovery and rehab after surgery.
- Patient won't lose as much time from work or school or require as much assistance from family or friends.
- Surgery is always a future option.

### Cons:

- Patient may need to change your activities and give up high-risk physical activity.
- Patient may need to wear a knee brace to participate in certain types of activities.
- Even with a knee brace, patient

may experience repeated episodes of instability during which the knee gives away.

- Over time, knee instability may cause irreparable damage to the cartilage and other parts of the knee.

## Surgical Treatment

The patient may need reconstructive surgery to resolve his or her knee problem. If surgery is the preferred option, you should discuss with your patient why it's necessary, what to expect and any potential risks.

Surgery should be considered if:

- The patient's knee gives way during typical daily activities (functional instability).
- The patient is unable to participate in high-risk activities that are important to him or her.

## What the Patient Can Expect

The goal of surgery is to give the patient the most stable knee possible so that he or she can resume the previous level of activity with a safe knee that minimizes the risk of future knee damage.

About 9 in 10 people who undergo surgery report good to excellent results and are satisfied with their knee stability. Though most people return to sports activities, some don't return to their previous level of high-intensity sports activity after reconstruction and rehabilitation. They limit their activities by choice or because of pain, swelling, persistent looseness or age-related lifestyle changes.

## Pros and Cons of Surgery

### Pros:

- Successful reconstruction and rehabilitation can allow patient to return to full activities with a healthy knee.
- After rehab, patient should be able to participate in sports without the use of a brace and experience no episodes of instability in which the knee gives way.
- The grafted ligament eventually becomes as strong as or even stronger than the original ACL. Graft failure, at worst, is less than 5 percent.

### Cons:

- Surgery and anesthesia carry risks.
- Immediately after surgery, patient's mobility is restricted and daily activities are difficult. This can have a significant impact on work and family.
- Rehab after surgery is more work than is nonsurgical rehab. Recovery from surgery can be painful, and the postoperative rehabilitation program can be strenuous and time-consuming.
- The financial cost of surgery and rehabilitation can be significant.

