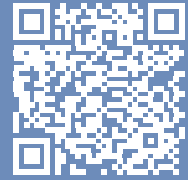


Stiffness After Knee Replacement



SCAN TO READ MORE

Most people recover a good range of movement after a knee replacement without a second thought. For the smaller number who find their knee tight and slow to bend, what happens in the first few weeks genuinely shapes the final result. This guide explains why early swelling control protects range of motion, what arthrofibrosis is and who is at risk, the range you actually need for everyday life, and how a stiff knee is treated.

THE TECHNIQUE

01 Control the Swelling

Elevate the leg above heart level and ice the knee, especially in the first two weeks.

02 Move Gently and Often

Guided physiotherapy and regular, gentle range – never forced.

03 Know the Range You Need

Around 90° to sit, ~110° for stairs and cars, 120° preferred.

04 Act Early

The longer a knee stays restricted, the harder full range is to regain.

05 Targeted Treatment

Physiotherapy first, then arthroscopic scar division if needed – MUA is no longer used.

AT A GLANCE

EARLY PRIORITY
Swelling Control

PREFERRED BEND
120 Degrees

THE CAUSE
Arthrofibrosis

FIRST-LINE
Physiotherapy

**"Range of motion is won by controlling swelling
and moving gently — not by forcing a stiff knee."**

— Dr Chien-Wen Liew

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. How long does stiffness last after a knee replacement?

Most early stiffness settles over the first 6 to 12 weeks as swelling reduces, and range can keep improving for up to a year. A knee that stops improving or goes backwards by 6 to 12 weeks should be reviewed.

Q. What is arthrofibrosis?

Excessive internal scar tissue that physically restricts knee movement. It affects a minority of patients and is best treated early, before the scar tissue matures and contracts.

Q. Do you use manipulation under anaesthesia (MUA)?

No. Once scar tissue has matured, forcing the knee tends to tear the quadriceps muscle rather than stretch the scar. Where a procedure is needed, arthroscopic division of the scar under direct vision is preferred.

ABOUT THE SURGEON

Dr Chien-Wen Liew exclusively performs total hip replacements via the direct anterior approach and total knee replacements via kinematic alignment only. He utilises patient-specific technology for both procedures, and practices from Orthopaedics 360 — within the Eastwood Private Hospital Precinct.

Dr Chien-Wen Liew

Hip and Knee Replacement Surgeon

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