

# Knee Swelling Self-Assessment

How to test your knee swelling for safer workouts and activity

## The Stroke Test

The stroke test allows you to independently assess your swelling. Test results will help you decide what exercises are appropriate for your level of recovery.



- A** Using one hand, gently sweep the inside of your knee 2-3 times (pushing toward the hip joint).
- B** On the outside of the knee, sweep downward with one hand (toward the ankle). Watch the inside portion of the knee (indicated by the circle in the photo) for a wave of fluid to appear during the downstroke.

### Grading System *(Table adapted from Sturgill L et al, Journal of Orthopaedic & Sports Physical Therapy, 2009)*

Test Result	Grade
No wave produced on downstroke	0
Small wave on inside aspect of knee with downstroke	Trace
Large bulge on inside aspect of knee with downstroke	1+
Swelling spontaneously returns to inside aspect of knee after upstroke (no downstroke needed)	2+
So much fluid that it is not possible to move the swelling out of the inside aspect of the knee	3+

### Indications for Activity

Red Light (3+ or 2+)	Yellow Light (1+ or Trace)	Green Light (0)
Do not run, jump, cut or do any heavy lifting until swelling decreases to 1+ or less.	You may participate in running, jumping and a normal lifting routine, but proceed with caution.	You may participate in running, jumping and a normal lifting routine without restriction.
Do not progress your program until you speak with your therapist.	Check swelling before and after workouts.	Continue to watch for swelling after activity.
Utilize swelling management strategies (ice, compression, elevation, NSAIDs).	Utilize swelling management strategies (ice, compression, elevation, NSAIDs).	