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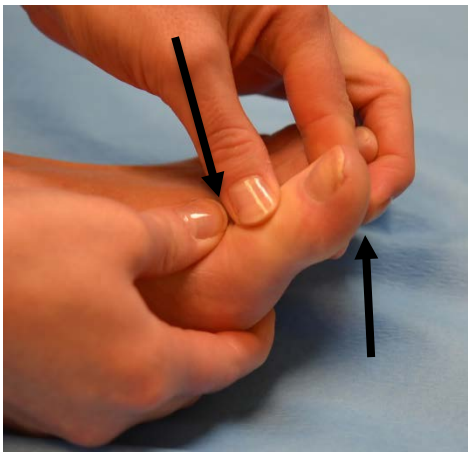
# Dorsiflexion (Turning upward of the foot or toes)

Range of motion exercises for the first MPJ

Moving the big toe joint after surgery is essential to a successful outcome. It teaches the newly healing scar tissue how this joint will function in the future. A lack of motion causes the toe to become stiff and can lead to long term changes in the mechanics of the foot, knee and hip.

After a cheilectomy, aggressive range of motion is needed by grasping the joint proximally to stabilize the first metatarsal head and moving the toe with the opposite hand. Using the ground and body weight and Body Armor Splint is suggested and appropriate starting 3 days after surgery.

After a more traditional bunion procedure such as an Austin Akin or Lapidus; ***motion is needed and essential but one must be careful of the bone cut and screws. However rarely, patients move the joint too much***.
Physical therapist can also help with this process. Patients who do not move the big toe joint, may require further surgery if the range of motion is not restored between the second and third week.
Holding the metatarsal to create stability, while moving the toe upward and downward just beyond its furthest extent, is recommended after the 3rd post-operative day. Using the ground and body weight, as above, can be done at the 4th week.
The exercises should be done at least 3 times a day and more if possible. Performing 30 seconds stretches at a time and gradually increasing the stretch after the toe gets warmed up is best practice. At least 5 repetitions should be done in the upward and downward motion for 30 seconds at a time.