



Department of Physical Therapy

Total Hip Replacement: Home Instructions (Posterior Approach)

Home Exercise Program

Perform the exercises you did with your physical therapist while you were in the hospital. Try to exercise 2-3 times a day. Start with 10 repetitions. Gradually increase to 20 repetitions as your pain and strength will allow.

Your hip will not heal faster by exercising more often. Remember that rest is an important part of your recovery.

Perform your ankle pump exercise 30-50 times an hour during the day to help improve circulation and reduce the risk of blood clots in your leg.

Activity

It is important that you stay active during your recovery; however, limit your activities. Too much activity can result in hip pain, swelling, inflammation and increased drainage during the early stages of recovery.

In addition to performing your home exercises, take **short** (20-30 feet) **walks** (using your walker or crutches) every hour during the day. These short walks will improve circulation in your legs and help control swelling and pain.

Take **longer** (100-200 feet) **exercise walks** 3-4 times daily to help build endurance and strength. Avoid hills, inclines and uneven surfaces. They can cause you to lose your balance and fall.

When walking, if you notice you are getting tired or having hip pain/swelling, it is time to rest. Let how you feel, amount of hip pain and swelling be your activity level guide.

Ice Therapy

Apply an ice pack to your hip 2-3 times per day for 20 minutes to help decrease pain, swelling and inflammation. Always place an insulation barrier (towel) between the ice pack and your skin. The ice pack may cause injury if placed in direct contact with your skin. Inspect the skin under the ice pack after each use. If you have any reactions such as heightened pain, increased swelling or redness, itching, blisters, discoloration, welts, or other changes in skin appearance, stop using the ice pack and contact your surgeon at once.

Resting and Sleeping

It is important to rest and sleep during your recovery. Rest anytime you feel tired or fatigued.

When resting, elevate your feet as often as you can to prevent swelling in your calves and feet. You can rest your feet on the floor when you are at the table eating. However, elevate your feet when sitting watching TV, working on the computer or reading.

When sleeping on your back, place a pillow between your legs to prevent crossing them.

You may sleep on your affected side (the side you had surgery on) when you feel comfortable doing so.

You may sleep on your non-affected side with a pillow between your legs. This position will prevent your affected leg from crossing and rolling inward.

Dressing and Bathing

Have your Care Partner help you dress and bathe to improve safety and prevent falls. Also, use your long shoehorn, long-handled sponge, reacher and sock aid to maintain your total hip replacement precautions while dressing and bathing.

Avoid bathing in the bathtub unless you have a special tub chair or bench designed for the bathtub. You will not be able to maintain your total hip replacement precautions if you sit down inside the bathtub. You may stand and shower, but have your Care Partner assist you.

Toileting

The height of your toilet is important in maintaining your hip precautions. Some toilets are too low and will cause you to bend your hip past 90 degrees when sitting down and getting up. An elevated toilet seat helps prevent you from bending your hip past 90 degrees. You should continue to use your elevated toilet seat until your surgeon tells you it is no longer needed.

continued

Stair Climbing

Your physical therapist taught you how to go up and down stairs using your walker or crutches. Your Care Partner should be behind you when you are going up the stairs and in front of you when you are going down the stairs.

Remember:

- Your “good” leg is your non-affected leg. Your “bad” leg is your affected leg (the leg you had surgery on).
- When going upstairs, lead with your “good” leg.
- When going downstairs, lead with your “bad” leg.
- Your assistive device (walker or crutches) always stays with your “bad” leg.

Total Hip Precautions

- **DO NOT** cross your legs.
- **DO NOT** roll your leg inward. Your kneecap should point straight ahead when you stand and straight toward the ceiling when you lie on your back.
- **DO NOT** bend your hip past 90°. When sitting, do not lean forward over your affected leg and do not lift your knee higher than your hip.
- **DO NOT** combine any of these motions.

Activities to Avoid

- **DO NOT** sit in a low, soft chair for 6-10 weeks.
- **DO NOT** take long trips (car or plane) until approved by your surgeon.
- **DO NOT** sit longer than 1 hour without getting up and walking briefly.
- **DO NOT** squat or kneel.
- **DO NOT** jump on the affected leg or take part in contact sports.
- **DO NOT** prop a pillow under your knee when resting.
- **DO NOT** plop down when sitting. Hold the arms of the chair while lowering yourself to a sitting position.
- **DO NOT** place more weight on your leg than instructed to.
- **DO NOT** lean forward to pick up objects off the floor when sitting or standing.
- **DO NOT** stand “pigeon toed” or turn affected leg or foot inward.
- **DO NOT** reach down past your knees to pull up bed covers when lying in the bed.

Things to Remember

- Use your walker or crutches and elevated toilet seat as instructed by your doctor and physical therapist.
- Keep your toes pointing straight ahead and in line with your body when turning or pivoting.
- When backing up to a chair, bed or toilet, lead with your non-affected leg. Take short steps.
- Sit in chairs that position your hips higher than your knees.

Future Medical Appointments

Before an appointment with your dentist, urologist or gastroenterologist (GI doctor), our surgeons recommend you tell them that you have had a total hip replacement. These doctors may prescribe an antibiotic before performing any procedure to help prevent an infection. If you or any of your other doctors have any questions about the use of antibiotics, please contact your orthopaedic surgeon.

If you have any questions about these instructions, please call the Physical Therapy department at **(864) 797-1201**.