



Department of Physical Therapy

Total Hip Replacement: Home Instructions (Anterior 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 in your lower legs and reduce the risk of blood clots.

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. You should expect some pain as your activity level increases, but this pain should not increase over time.

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 while watching TV, working on the computer, reading or resting in bed.

When sleeping on your back, place a pillow or rolled blanket beside your affected leg to prevent it from rolling outward. When sleeping on your side, you may feel more comfortable if you place a pillow between your legs.

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.

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.

continued

Total Hip Precautions

DO NOT roll your leg outward. Your kneecap should point straight ahead when you stand and straight toward the ceiling when you lie on your back.

DO NOT lead with your affected leg when stepping backwards. For example, when you back up to a chair, bed or toilet, lead with your non-affected leg and take short steps.

Activities to Avoid

- **DO NOT** sit longer than 1 hour without getting up and walking briefly.
- **DO NOT** take long trips (car or plane) until approved by your surgeon.
- **DO NOT** jump on the affected leg or take part in contact sports.
- **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.

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**.