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# Preparing for Your Knee Replacement



## Experts in post-surgical rehab and care

Knee replacements are common procedures, but being prepared can make the recovery process much smoother and can help you achieve your goals more readily.



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### Pre-Op Preparation

- Factors to support recovery
- What to expect



### The Surgery

- A brief overview of what to expect, what is involved, and more



### Short Term After Surgery

- What to expect and what is normal immediately after surgery



### Rehab and Long-Term Health

- Goals of care, what treatment should look like, and what to expect down the road



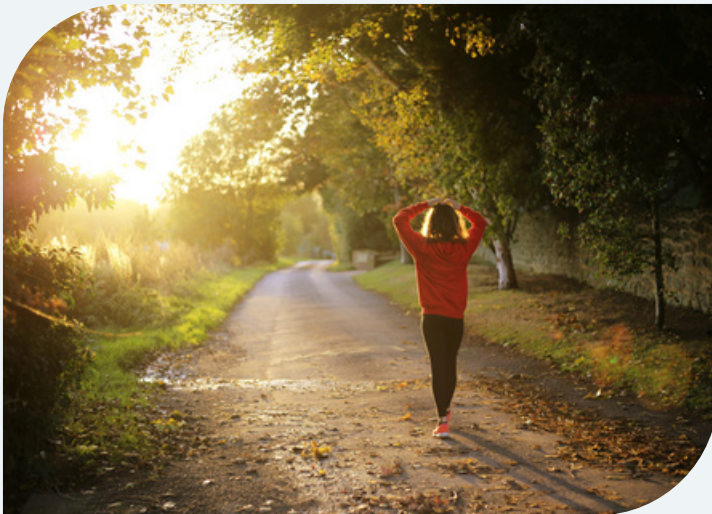
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# Pre-Op Preparation

## Setting yourself up for success

Knee replacements are common orthopaedic procedures, and generally the long-term outcomes are good. However, there are things you can do **before** surgery that can help make your recovery easier and outcome better.



### Exercise!

- Activity levels, to a point, can be predictive of how you do after surgery.
- Maximizing your endurance, strength and overall health should be a priority **before** surgery.



### Weight Management

- While this is far from an end-all be-all component, working to get your overall weight down is one of the most recommended elements for managing joint arthritis and can be correlated with surgical outcomes.



### Maximize (or Maintain) Range of Motion

- The recovery of a normal capacity to bend and straighten you knee after surgery is imperative.
- It's not uncommon to see some loss of motion before surgery. Maximizing, or at least preventing further loss, your mobility

### Prioritize Diet and Sleep



- With painful joint conditions and pain in general, improved sleep, reduced or no alcohol intake and a diet low in processed sugar appear to be helpful for improvements in pain and function.

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# The Surgery

## Setting yourself up for success

Different surgeons may utilize slightly different procedures or approaches. There are, however, some general things that will apply for you regardless of small differences. The reality is this – while the surgeries are common, different people often have different experiences immediately following and in the months after knee replacement. Things like soreness/aching (especially at night), some superficial numbness around the knee, and swelling are normal. It's important to understand a few key things.



### Understanding Pain

An incision will be made. Your native joint surfaces will undergo significant changes, often including installation of hardware. Some aching and pain, ranging from the lower thigh and into the shin, is typical after these surgeries. It's important to understand that these are rarely indicative of something wrong.

### Staying Ahead of the Curve

Short-term use of prescription pain medication is okay! Surgeons use established guidelines when it comes to prescription medication to ensure safety. Be sure to keep an open line of communication regarding pain management, plans for tapering off of stronger pain medications, and other non-pharmaceutical or over-the-counter options for pain management.

### Get Moving!

In recent years, more and more people are being discharged home after surgery. Whether a therapist comes to your home initially or you go to a clinic, it is imperative to get up and get moving. Home health typically will involve very general exercise/movement. While general walking and exercise is beneficial, the sooner you can begin with targeted exercise to improve your mobility and strength, the better.

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# Early Rehab

## Be realistic, and be prepared to work

Knee replacements are exactly that – a replacement of a joint that was previously giving you issues with pain and function. Most people don't spontaneously return to their desired activities with family, at home, or wherever life takes you. Quality rehab should challenge you and should deliver progressive, appreciable improvements in how well you can bend and straighten the knee, as well as how you can perform day to day functions.



### Manual Interventions

Soft tissue and scar mobilization can be beneficial, but your therapist should absolutely be spending a chunk of time manually working on the mobility of the knee joint. These interventions are intended to facilitate improvements in range of motion so that functional tasks like putting your shoes on or getting out of a chair are less challenging due to mobility.



### Strength Training

3 sets of 10 with a 1-pound ankle weight isn't going to cut it for the vast majority of people. Progressive exercise that can yield true physiologic change is indicated to help with recovery of your function. Strength training should also absolutely include weightbearing activity. No one ever got out of a chair by simply kicking a weight out – strengthening should carry over into specific task simulation.



### Short-Term Modifications

It might be necessary to use a cane or something similar for a bit. You may require strategies to make tasks at home safer or more manageable. Having candid discussions with your physical therapist to ensure optimal safety and independence is a critical component of this phase.



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# Late-Stage Rehab and Down the Road



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## Restrictions

Believe it or not, some surgeons advocate for different modification or restrictions. Some say to never run, some acknowledge that you may do so if you feel so inclined. Asking your surgeon what they advise is worthwhile – remember, they're the ones that did the installation, and they know their hardware.



## Staying Active

You should explore what activity you plan to return to with your physical therapist. Gradual, structured work to get to those activities are often what is required, and exercise prescription can be created and provided to ensure that you can optimally perform. It will likely be **several months** before you "feel normal" or have established a new normal. This whole process is not a process of just a few weeks.



## Any Worries?

The good news is that these surgeries and associated rehab are often quite successful. Hardware failure is relatively uncommon, and issues that threaten the integrity of the joint are often associated with traumatic injuries. Maintaining an active lifestyle and exercising a degree of caution often lead to people pursuing a



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