

Enhanced Recovery After Surgery

Orthopaedics – Recovery Booklet



Western Health

This handout outlines your physiotherapy management after Hip or Knee Replacement surgery.

This document should not replace the advice of your relevant health care professionals.

Physiotherapy advice and exercise plays an important role in your recovery after your operation and in helping you return home as soon as possible.

Healing and Recovery

It is important to keep your wound clean and dry. This care helps with healing and to avoid complications.

Please make an appointment to see your local doctor if you experience any of the following symptoms around your wound:

- Fluid discharge leaking outside of your dressing
- Swelling
- Extreme pain and stiffness – beyond levels you experienced while in hospital
- Surgical site becoming increasingly red and hot
- Feeling feverish or experiencing shakes or chills
- Significant bleeding
- Dull chest pain or chest pain with breathing
- Swelling in the leg
- Redness and soreness in the calf

If you experience **ANY** of the symptoms above please call 000 and present to the Emergency Department.

Pain Control and Swelling Management

Pain after this type of surgery is normal. It is a part of the healing process and will improve over time. One strategy for pain management is medication.

Before you leave the hospital, your doctor will provide you with some medication to assist you in managing your pain.

It is important for you to:

- Take all your medications as prescribed
- Follow instructions given by your treating team

Some pain after surgery is normal, but if the pain becomes increasingly more severe than when you were in hospital, you may need medical attention.

If you are concerned, it is recommended you see your local doctor or present to the Emergency Department.

Rest, Ice and Elevation

Rest: During the day **don't sit for longer than 30 to 45 minutes at a time.**

Use chairs with arms. You may nap if you are tired, but do not stay in bed all day. Frequent, short walks — either indoors or outdoors — are the key to a successful recovery.

Ice: Applying an ice pack can help to assist with keeping the swelling down.

You can apply the ice pack up to a maximum of four times per day, for no longer than 20 minutes at a time. It is important to AVOID direct contact between ice and your skin, as this may result in an ice burn.

It is particularly helpful to apply ice after finishing your exercises.

Elevation: When you are resting it is important to keep your leg elevated.

Tip: You can use a cold bag or frozen vegetables from the freezer and wrap it in a slightly damp cloth.

Occasionally, you may perform a sudden movement or accidentally hit your leg with an object. This may lead to a sudden increase in pain. Generally, this should resolve on its own after a short period of about 15 minutes rest. If the pain continues or increases, please speak to your local doctor or contact the numbers below.

Further questions?

After your surgery you may have questions about your recovery. Here are some options for you to contact.

If you have a question about your operation, please call your local doctor or 13SICK/National Home Doctor Service for after-hours doctor service on 13 74 25.

Before attending the Emergency Department in person, you can attend the Virtual Emergency Department for 24 hour care. <https://www.vved.org.au/>

For a nurse, please call the Nurse on Call service on 1300 60 60 24.

If you have any questions about your medications please go to your local pharmacy, or ring the 1300 Medicines line on 1300 633 424.

If you need any further information about your operation, please call us on (03) 8345 6666 and ask for Lower West Ward (Williamstown) or Ward 1 West (Footscray).

Psychological Management

Mindfulness, breathing and meditation can also be a great way to help manage your pain.

For example, you may use the breathing exercises learned before surgery to practice calm breathing.

Take a deep breath in to fully inflate your lungs, hold for 2-3 seconds and slowly release the breath.

You can think of the in-breath as the accelerator in the car and the out-breath as the break. The “in” breath prepares the body for action, while a long breath out, helps the body to slow down, slowing our heart rate and promoting relaxation.

Tip: Now would be a great time to revisit your Virtual Surgery School Video for examples of how to do this.

Exercise

The exercise program provided to you by the physiotherapist will help to reduce stiffness-based pain over time. It is important that they are performed as prescribed in order to maximize their effectiveness. It is normal for the new joint to feel uncomfortable during exercise at first, but this will settle with time.

Complete your exercises 2 to 3 times a day. You may choose to break the program to smaller segments to help reduce pain and discomfort. It is better to do a little (lower repetitions) more often to help reduce any potential discomfort.

Deep breathing

- Take five deep breaths
- Cough strongly
- Rest a minute and repeat



Ankle pumps

- Move your foot up and down
- Repeat ____ times, hourly



Static quads

- Keeping ____ leg straight
- Push back of knee into bed, to tighten front thigh muscle
- Hold 3-5 seconds, and then relax
- Repeat ____ times



Buttock Squeezes

- Lying down
- Squeeze buttocks muscles together
- Hold for 3 seconds, then relax
- Repeat ____ time



Heel Slides

- Lying down
- Slide your ____ heel up towards your bottom
- Straighten leg back down
- Repeat ____ times



Quads Over Roll

- Lie down with a roll under your ____ knee
- Push back of your knee into the roll
- Lift heel from bed until the knee is straight
- Hold 3 seconds and lower slowly
- Repeat ____ times



Straight Leg Raise

- Lying down
- Lift your ____ leg off the bed while keeping the knee straight
- Hold for 3 seconds
- Lower leg back to bed slowly
- Repeat ____ times



Seated Knee Extension

- Sit on a firm surface
- Slowly lift your ____ foot off the ground until your knee is straight
- Hold for 3 seconds
- Lower foot back to ground
- Repeat ____ times



Heel Raises

- Stand with your hands on a stable surface
- Rise up on to your toes, lifting heels off the floor
- Slowly return heels back to floor
- Repeat ____ times



Mini Squats

- Standing holding a firm surface and feet shoulder width apart
- Stick your bottom out and pretend you are sitting on a chair
- Straighten back up
- Repeat ____ times



Knee Flexion

- Stand with your hands on a stable surface
- Bend _____ knee bringing the heel towards your bottom
- Slowly return your foot to the ground
- Repeat _____ times



Hip Abduction

- Stand with your hands on a stable surface
- Whilst keeping your back and knees straight, gently move your _____ leg sideways
- Return to the starting position
- Repeat _____ times



Hip Extension

- Stand with your hands on a stable surface
- Keeping your knees and back straight, gently move your _____ leg behind you
- Return leg to starting position
- Repeat _____ times



Hip Flexion

- Stand with your hands on a stable surface
- Keeping your back straight, lift your _____ knee up
- Slowly return leg to starting position
- Repeat _____ times



Physiotherapy Follow-up

The bookings team will contact you within the first 7-10 days after your surgery to arrange your follow-up physiotherapy. This appointment will be at one of our Community Rehabilitation Centres unless otherwise discussed.

During your rehabilitation program, your physiotherapist will help guide you through your recovery, including planning and organizing your return to usual activities in your daily life (e.g., work, driving and other hobbies).

Remember you have all of the tools to help you with your recovery! Pre-made meals, assistive equipment, medication, important phone numbers and a care person! Ask for help if you need it and don't hesitate to contact your GP or use the phone numbers above if you are concerned.

You can also contact us via email if you need: ERASorthopaedics@wh.org.au

The **Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights** describes the rights of all people who use the Australian healthcare system. Copies of the charter in community languages are available near the main entrance of all Western Health hospitals, or ask a staff member or volunteer.

For more information, visit www.safetyandquality.gov.au/australian-charter-healthcare-rights



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