



York and Scarborough
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Getting Ready for Your Joint Replacement

Practical advice for patients, relatives and
Carers on managing at home

① For more information, please contact:

Orthopaedic therapy team
York Hospital
01904 725384

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How occupational therapy can help you

Occupational therapy for elective surgery often starts before your operation. You will receive an appointment to see the pre-operative assessment nurse. At this clinic appointment, the nurse will go through the operation and process in more detail and a referral can be made for an occupational therapist to contact you. You may be asked to complete our home environment questionnaire - including furniture heights.

Plan ahead

The main aim of having a knee or hip replacement is to relieve pain and allow for better movement of the joint. However, after having the surgery you will need time for the new joint to settle and for you to recover. The recovery process and length of time is different for each person.

Your new joint for the first week will feel heavier and weaker. Also, the wound can be painful when moving, particularly with knee replacements.

It is essential to plan how you will manage at home after your surgery. Think about the things you would normally do and make adaptations where you can. If you live alone or provide any care and support for another person you will need to consider arranging help with this before your surgery. This may be family/friends or more formal support to help you on discharge.

Planning and organising your home environment

Following the operation and on your discharge home, you are most likely to be walking with either two walking sticks, two crutches or a walking frame.

It is important to ensure you have adequate space to move about your home using your walking aids between furniture and rooms. Consider what will make your home safer. Make sure you have secure handrails along the staircase. Remove any rugs to reduce any tripping hazards.

You may need to consider whether you need to ask a friend or relative to help with putting the bins out, shopping or any heavy tasks.

Set up a 'recovery centre' where you will spend most of your time – gather round your chair things you regularly need so it is within easy reach.



Furniture

Chair

A good seat height for you will be when your feet are flat on the floor and your hips are slightly higher than your knee when sitting.

Ideally choose to sit in a chair that has a firm seat, upright position with a supportive back and arms to push up on. If you don't have a suitable chair in your property, consider borrowing one from friends or family. Alternatively, if your chair is low, you may raise your chair with an extra cushion or folded blanket.

Bed

Consider if there is an alternative bed that is more suitable to use in your property if yours appears low.

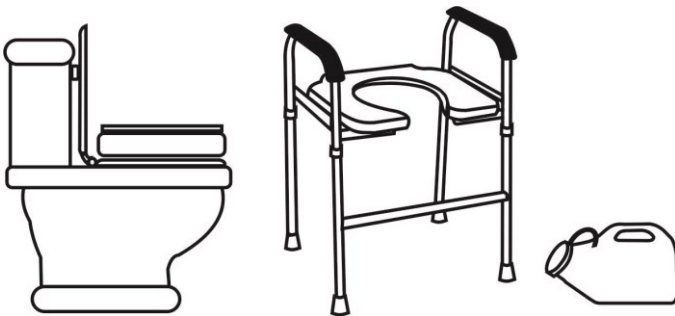
It is often easier following surgery to get into bed leading with your un-operated leg first, as it can be less painful. You may want to consider swapping sides of the bed.

Toilets

Toilets are often the lowest seat in the property. It may help to use temporary equipment to aid sitting and standing after the operation. If this is needed, the equipment can either be provided following your consultation with the occupational therapist or from the hospital ward at the time of discharge.

If you live in a house with a toilet upstairs only, you may need to consider how you will manage going up and down the stairs, and whether having a commode or urine bottle may be of use.

Images below of a raised toilet seat, toilet frame and seat and a urine bottle.



Kitchen activities

After the joint replacement you may become tired quicker than you would normally. So, standing for long periods and walking around from cupboard to cupboard can be hard work, especially if walking with two sticks, crutches or a walking frame.

If you live with someone who can help, it is not generally an issue; however, the following advice may help.

Moving items like plates, cups and cutlery into one convenient area such as on the countertop can help conserve energy. Moving items from low or high cupboards or shelves in the fridge/freezer will reduce any excessive bending or over-reaching.

Having easy to prepare meals may be convenient for the first few weeks following surgery, especially if you live alone.

Carrying items around the kitchen will be difficult if you are using walking aids. You may need to consider using a kitchen table or having a stool by the kitchen counter to eat and drink at. Alternatively consider using a bag to carry sealed travel mugs and containers to a seated area.

You may need to ask for some initial support from any family, friends in the first few weeks of being home to help with heavier tasks such as laundry, cleaning, and vacuuming.

An occupational therapist may discuss alternative options with you if requiring further advice.

Shopping

Before coming into hospital for your surgery, ensure you have an adequate stock of food at home in the fridge/freezer for when you return. As initially you may find getting outside to do any shopping yourself difficult. If you can, organise on-line shopping deliveries and or ask any family/friends to help for the first few weeks whilst you recover at home.

Age UK, Carers Plus and Good Gym offer shopping services for people. Contact details are available in this leaflet for you to organise any help on page 13.

Managing pets

You can empty sachets or tins of pet food into bowls whilst standing or sitting and then lowering the bowls to the floor using a helping hand to reduce any excessive bending. In the first few weeks of your recovery at home, arrange help from family/friends with any care for your pets.

Age UK Services 'Keeping your Pet' can provide temporary help caring for your pet offering walking and feeding services.

Practical advice to consider:

1. Hip precautions

Some patients who are having hip replacement surgery should avoid these three movements for the first six weeks because this can be extremely uncomfortable for you. This also helps reduce the risks of dislocating your new hip following surgery. There is more information about this in your 'Total Hip Replacement booklet' and speak with your consultant team to discuss whether hip precautions apply to you.

- Do not bend more than 90 degrees, which is a right angle at your hip. This can mean you cannot reach your feet as you are doing now.
- Do not twist your hip while in sitting, standing or lying.
- Do not cross your legs while in sitting, standing or lying.

It is advisable in the early stages of your recovery to sleep on your back or on your operated side.

2. Knee precautions

Avoid twisting at the knee and kneeling on your new joint.

Washing and dressing after your surgery

It is recommended initially on discharge home to wash at the sink rather than getting into a bath or shower depending on whether your wound is covered with a waterproof dressing and how you are feeling.

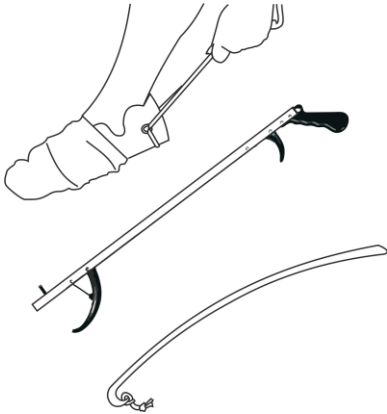
It is also recommended to not sit in a bath following a hip or knee replacement in the first few weeks of having the surgery.

If you are planning to shower in a cubicle, consider where you keep your shower/wash products as reaching to the floor cause excessive bending and twisting. This also can increase the risk of falling.

If you have had a hip replacement, you may not be able to reach your feet yourself, as you would normally do. This and excessive bending can cause hip discomfort.

Dressing aids such as a long handled sponge, long handled shoehorn and sponges, helping hand, sock/tights aids and elasticated shoelaces can assist you manage to independently wash and dress yourself whilst recovering at home.

Image below is of a Sock aid, Helping hand and a long-handled shoe horn.



If you have access to the internet and electronic devices, below are useful website links to watch videos showing you how to use the dressing aids following your hip or knee surgery to getting yourself dressed.

YouTube – Dressing and undressing after a hip or knee replacement surgery

YouTube – Post Orthopaedic Surgery Education using adaptive equipment

Useful contacts

Orthopaedic Occupational Therapy Department
York hospital, telephone 01904 725384

Age UK Services - Net Neighbour Shopping services and Home From Hospital Services and Keeping Your Pet services <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/york/our-services/keepyourpet/>

Telephone:

- York - 01904 634061
- Harrogate - 01423 502253
- North Allerton - 01609 771624
- Scarborough - 01723 379058
- Hull - 01482 324644
- Filey - 01723 516643

Carers Plus – Supporting Carers, advice and practical help for Scarborough, Whitby and East riding. Also offer 'Home from Hospital Services'.

www.carerplus.net

Telephone: 01723 850155

Good Gym – is an organisation of local volunteers offering people in their community with household jobs, Moving furniture and deliveries. www.GoodGym.org

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

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Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:
www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

Owner	Laura Johnson, Orthopaedic Occupational Therapist
Date first issued	February 2025
Review Date	February 2028
Version	1 (issued February 2025)
Approved by	Trauma & Orthopaedics DGM
Document Reference	PIL1581 v1

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