

Post-Surgery: Do and Do Not

Rehabilitation after your surgery plays an extremely important role in making your knee replacement a success. Here are some simple guidelines you can follow to help with your rehabilitation.

Do

Follow your surgeon's and physical therapist's instructions carefully. Doing so is very important to your long-term recovery.

Keep up with your exercises. Be sure to follow the directions of your physical therapist. The more closely you listen to their recommendations, the more successful your rehab will be.

Engage in lower-stress activities. These may include: golfing, hiking, walking, biking, stationary skiing or swimming. (Note: this is not a complete list). You may also be able to participate in cross-country skiing, table tennis, rowing, Tai Chi or bowling – ask your physician or physical therapist for specific instructions.

Take care of your lungs. It is important that your lungs are working at their best following surgery so you get plenty of oxygen to the tissues of your body that are trying to heal. If your lungs are not exercised properly, it can lead to poor blood oxygen levels and may even cause pneumonia.

Manage your pain as directed. Be sure to take pain medications as prescribed by your doctor. If your medication is not relieving the pain sufficiently, be sure to tell your doctor.

Control swelling to help reduce pain and improve your circulation and range of motion. Put ice cubes in a sealable plastic bag, wrap it in a towel (or you could burn your skin) and apply to your knee. You should also elevate your knee. In bed you can do this with pillows to lift your knee above your heart.

Rest up. It's important to get plenty of sleep to help your knee heal. If you are having problems sleeping, speak to your doctor. He or she can recommend an over-the-counter sleep aid or prescribe medication to help you.

Do Not

Participate in high-impact activities or activities with a high risk of injury. These include those that can result in falling, getting tangled with opponents or fracturing the bone around the implant.

Participate in any of the following activities (Note: this is not a complete list):

- Competitive racquet sports (such as singles tennis)
- High-impact aerobics
- High-intensity jogging/running
- Mogul skiing
- Martial arts
- Rope jumping
- Rough contact sports

Twist your knee. Instead, turn your entire body to avoid stress on your knee. Also avoid imposing any jarring forces on your knee.

Schedule dental work or surgical procedures on your bladder or colon without consulting your surgeon first.

These can cause bacteria to enter your bloodstream and may lead to infection in your new joint. Before you have any procedures done, be sure to discuss them with your surgeon. Also, make sure every doctor you visit knows about your knee replacement surgery so they can take the appropriate precautions against infection.

Lift heavy objects. Doing so can cause damage to your new knee.

Push yourself too hard. You have time to recover; use this time so your recovery goes smoothly.