

# Physiotherapy after having a total hip replacement

Information for patients



This booklet provides you with physiotherapy advice to follow after having a total hip replacement. If you would like further information, or have any particular worries, please do not hesitate to speak to your healthcare team.

## **Getting going**

You will be helped out of bed on the day of your operation or the next morning.

Physiotherapy is a vital step after having surgery and is essential to ensure the success of the operation. Carry out the exercises in this leaflet as directed by your physiotherapist.

## **Following your procedure**

You will see a physiotherapist the day after your operation and they will work through some exercises with you and help you take a few steps to sit in a chair. You will be given a walking aid to help you balance and your physiotherapist will advise you on how much weight you can put on your operated leg.

## **Walking**

Initially you will be supervised by a nurse or therapist while walking. They will advise you when it is safe for you to walk on your own.

You may turn around in either direction, but you must not pivot or twist on your operated leg. Step around instead.

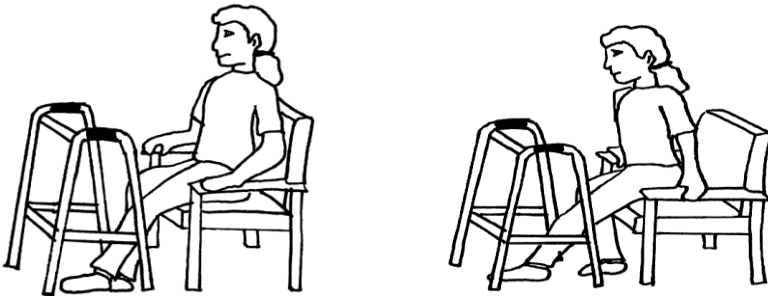
The distance you will be able to walk varies from person to person. It is a good idea to build distance up gradually to maintain fitness. You will not damage your hip by walking unless you put more weight through it than advised.

## Standing up

1. Move to the front of the chair seat.
2. Push up using the arms of the chair, your arms and your sound leg into a standing position.

## Sitting down

1. Make sure you can feel the chair against the back of your legs.
2. Reach back for the arms of the chair.
3. Without bending forwards gently lower yourself into the chair, taking the weight evenly through your arms.
4. You may find it more comfortable to slide your operated leg forwards as you sit down (see diagram below).



## Using stairs

Please let us know if you think you will need to use stairs when you leave the hospital. Your physiotherapist can practise them with you before you leave.

This is the order you should follow to go up and down:

### Going up:

1. Non-operated leg
2. Operated leg
3. Crutch/stick

### Coming down:

1. Crutch/stick
2. Operated leg
3. Non-operated leg

## Exercises

Exercises are extremely important. Please practise these before you come in for your operation and as soon as possible afterwards.

Once you have had your hip operation it is up to you to work hard in order to return to your normal activities as soon as possible.

Either the bed or the chair exercises should be done hourly for the first few days following your surgery.

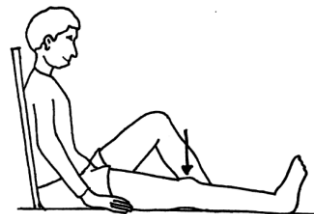
After this, exercises should be performed at least five times a day unless your physiotherapist advises otherwise.

### Bed exercises

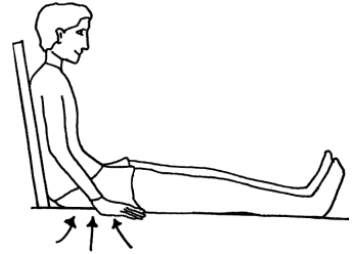
1. Foot and ankle  
Move your ankle slowly round in a large circle. Repeat this for 30 seconds every hour.



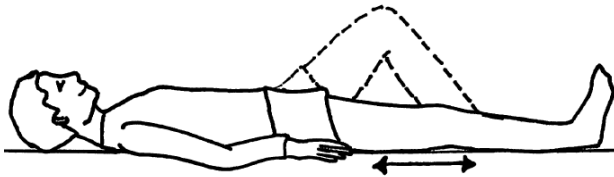
2. Thigh squeezes  
With legs out straight, push the back of your knee firmly into the bed. Hold for five seconds then relax. Repeat 10 times.



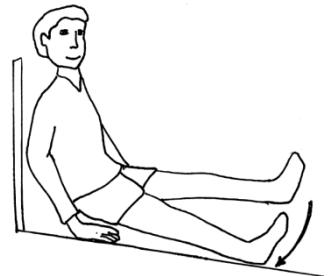
3. Bottom squeezes  
Squeeze buttocks firmly together for five seconds.  
Repeat 10 times.



4. Knee bending lying on your back  
Bend and straighten your hip and knee by sliding your foot up and down the bed. Repeat 10 times.



5. Leg sliding  
Keeping your leg straight and your toes pointed towards the ceiling, slide your operated leg out to the side as far as you can manage, then slide back in.  
Repeat 10 times.



## Chair exercise

6. **Knee straightening**  
Pull your toes up, tighten your thigh muscles and straighten your knee. Hold for five seconds then slowly lower down. Repeat 10 times.



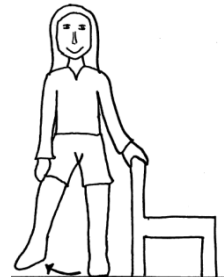
## Standing exercises

Hold on to a firm support.

7. Bring your leg back behind you, keeping your knee straight. Do not lean forwards, then slowly lower down. Repeat 10 times.



8. Slowly lift your leg sideways, then lower it back to the middle. Keep your body straight throughout the exercise. Repeat 10 times.

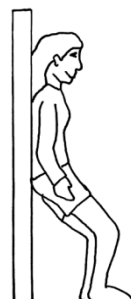


9. Slowly lift your leg in front of you as high as you can manage up to 90 degrees, you may bend your knee. Then lower down again. Repeat 10 times.



#### 10. Mini squats

Stand with your back against a wall, with your feet shoulder-width apart. Slowly slide your back down the wall allowing your knees to bend to about 40 degrees. Then straighten your knees to return to your starting position. Repeat 10 times.



**It is important that you continue your exercises for at least three months.** Continue to use the crutches/walking stick until you can walk without a limp.



## **Frequently asked questions**

### **Will I have physiotherapy when I leave the hospital?**

If you require ongoing physiotherapy it will be discussed with you and arranged while you are still in hospital.

### **Will I feel tired?**

You have had a major operation, so you may get tired quickly. This is normal and your strength will gradually return over the next few months.

### **How long will I have pain for?**

It is likely that you will continue to experience some discomfort for several weeks. Ensure you are taking enough painkillers to allow you to walk and perform your exercises. If the pain is not well controlled, please inform your GP.

### **When can I drive my car again?**

Check with your consultant but it is usually okay for you to start driving after 6 to 12 weeks. You must inform your insurance company that you have had an operation.

### **How will I manage getting in and out of a car?**

It is easier to get into the car from a road or driveway rather than the pavement (which is higher).

1. Put the passenger seat as far back as possible with the backrest slightly tilted back.
2. Stand with your back to the car with knees touching the seat.
3. Gently lower yourself down onto the seat with your bottom as far onto the seat as possible, sliding your operated leg out in front of you.
4. Swing your legs round into the car.

Getting out of the car is the same procedure in reverse.

## **Do you have any further questions?**

Please feel free to ask your physiotherapy team if you have any further questions.

Your physiotherapist is:

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## **Contact details**

### **Barnet Hospital**

Therapy services  
Wellhouse Lane  
Barnet, EN5 3DJ

Tel: 020 8216 4805

### **Chase Farm Hospital**

Therapy services  
The Ridgeway  
Enfield, EN2 8JL

Tel: 020 8375 2199/1679

### **Royal Free Hospital**

Physiotherapy department  
Pond Street  
London NW3 2QG

Tel: 020 7794 0500

Ext: 35284 (in-patient orthopaedic department)  
34059 (out-patient department)



## **More information**

For more information about the physiotherapy service at the Royal Free London, please visit our website:

[www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/services-a-z/therapy-services/physiotherapy](http://www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/services-a-z/therapy-services/physiotherapy)

## **Your feedback**

If you have any feedback on this leaflet or for a list of references for it, please email: [rf.communications@nhs.net](mailto:rf.communications@nhs.net)

## **Alternative formats**

This leaflet is also available in large print. If you need this leaflet in another format – for example Braille, a language other than English or audio – please speak to a member of staff.

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