

PATIENT GUIDE

What to Expect After Your Hip or Knee Replacement



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Apex Physical Rehabilitation | Hip & Knee Arthroplasty

If you have had a total knee or hip replacement surgery, you may wonder how to recover your mobility and function. Physical therapy is an essential part of your rehabilitation process, as it helps you restore your strength, range of motion, and balance.



Apex Physical Rehabilitation & Wellness is ready to make sure that your total hip or knee replacement rehabilitation goes smoothly. By working with many of the areas leading orthopedic surgeons, your Apex DPT will design a plan based on the latest evidence-based post-surgical protocols proven to speed recovery, reduce pain and inflammation, and restore range of motion.

4 Tips For The Fastest & Most Complete Recovery Possible

- 1** In order to avoid complications and setbacks, learn about how to manage the risks of associated with your procedure (blood clots, dislocation, and infection). Follow your surgeon's instructions regarding weight-bearing, wound care, and other precautions.
- 2** Engage your physical therapist as soon as possible after surgery. To facilitate the best possible rehabilitation experience, take advantage of the Apex Presurgical Readiness program. See apexrehab.com/pre-post-operative-care.
- 3** Proactively manage the pain and inflammation. Pain and swelling can be persistent in the first days and weeks after your procedure. Stay ahead of the pain by taking the prescribed medications as directed, apply ice for 15-20 minute sessions as frequently as possible, and when instructed, wear compression garments to reduce swelling and edema.
- 4** Avoid frustration and depression by setting reasonable expectations for your recovery. Joint replacement rehabilitation can be a slow process over weeks and months. To stay positive, engage your physical therapist to set goals and celebrate each achievement along the way.



The Changing & Expanding Role of Physical Therapy

Physical therapists play a vital and expanding role in helping patients recover from arthroplasty and achieve their desired level of function and quality of life.

Some of the changes and expanding role include:

- Earlier mobilization and discharge of patients after surgery, with an emphasis on home-based or outpatient rehabilitation.
- Increased use of preoperative physical therapy to optimize patient function, reduce pain, and educate patients about postoperative expectations and exercises.
- More individualized and patient-centered rehabilitation programs, based on patient goals, preferences, and outcomes.
- Greater incorporation of evidence-based practice and clinical practice guidelines to inform physical therapist decision making and intervention selection.
- More collaboration and communication with other health care providers, such as surgeons, nurses, pharmacists, and social workers, to ensure coordinated and comprehensive care.

Important Questions To Ask Before Choosing Your Physical Therapist

1. Other than showing me exercises, what else will the therapist be doing for me?

One of the most common misconceptions about PT is that it's only about exercises and showing you how to use assistive devices like crutches. As a result, many people don't expect much from their PT experience. But advances in physical medicine have changed the PT profession. Today, PTs have more specialized training and expertise. That's why before choosing your PT, you should ask about training, certifications, and clinical experience with your specific condition.

Apex Physical Rehabilitation & Wellness therapists have extensive experience with orthopedic patients preparing for and recovering from total hip and knee replacements. That's why many of the areas leading physicians recommend Apex for their arthroplasty and other patients.

2. What role will evidence-based therapy and continuing education play in my treatment?

The Texas Board of Physical Therapy Examiners requires each licensed therapist to complete 24 hours of continuing education every two years. This is a minimal requirement. At Apex Physical Rehabilitation & Wellness, we require therapists to do additional work in evidence-based courses. These include the latest techniques clinically proven to speed recovery for arthroplasty patients. Before choosing your joint replacement physical therapist, ask about their orthopedic experience, specialized certifications, and continuing education courses for pre and post-surgical orthopedic procedures.

3. Will you see your therapist each visit and what role will physical therapy aides play in your plan of care?

In order to control costs, insurance companies pressure practitioners to deliver the best quality of care while accepting lower reimbursement rates. Our offices are led by an experienced licensed physical therapist (PT) and physical therapist assistants (PTA) who work together to create and monitor each treatment plan. Depending on your schedule and therapist availability we encourage and attempt to schedule the treatment with the same PT or PTA to assure continuity of care. Physical Therapist assistants (PTA) are licensed and not the same as Physical therapy aides or technicians.



Beginning Postoperative Exercises - Weeks 1-3*

*Always consult with your surgeon and physical therapist before starting your exercise program.

Beginning in recovery after surgery, your exercise goals should be to increase blood flow, prevent blood clots, and activate your hip or knee muscles.

Hip Replacement Beginning Exercises

Typical exercises for in bed or in a chair:

[\(See Hip Exercises- American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons for pictures and instructions, aaos.org\)](#)

1. Ankle Pumps
2. Ankle Rotations
3. Buttock Contractions
4. Thigh Squeezes
5. Quadriceps Sets
6. Straight Leg Raises
7. Abduction Exercises

Frequency: As often as every 10 minutes.

Duration: 10-30 seconds each.

Knee Replacement Beginning Exercises

Typical exercises for in bed or in a chair:

[\(See Knee Exercises American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons for pictures and instructions, aaos.org\)](#)

1. Quadriceps Sets
2. Straight Leg Raises
3. Ankle Pumps
4. Knee Straightening Exercises
5. Bed Supported Knee Bends
6. Sitting Supported Knee Bends

Frequency: As often as every 10 minutes.

Duration: 10-30 seconds each.



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