Occupational Therapy

Advice for patients having a hip or knee replacement

It is essential to take time now to organise yourself at home so you will be able to manage safely and independently once you return home. Please read and act upon the recommendations and advice listed below prior to your hospital admission. Take some time to complete the furniture heights form and bring this with you on the day of your surgery to give to your Occupational Therapist.

Moving about

Chairs

- Ideally your chair should have a firm seat, supportive back and arms to push up on.
- If your chair is low, you should make alternative arrangements. For example, you could raise your chair with an extra cushion or folded blanket under the existing cushion. Alternatively, borrow higher furniture prior to admission.

Beds

- Ideally your bed should have a well sprung mattress and should not be too low.

Toilets

- Your Occupational Therapist will address any issues regarding the height of your toilet with you at the pre-op hip education class or telephone consultation.

Equipment

- If you are issued with a raised toilet seat before admission, you will need to return this to the Occupational Therapy Department at Frimley Park Hospital 3 months after your surgery.
- If you were issued equipment from an Occupational Therapist at Heatherwood, you will need to contact NRS Berkshire on 0844 8936960 or NRS Buckinghamshire on 0845 1238248 to arrange collection.

Information for patients having a total hip replacement only

- Patients who have a total hip replacement should avoid bending their hip beyond 90 degrees (a right angle), for the first few weeks because this could be extremely uncomfortable for you. You should review the heights of your furniture at home and ensure they meet your needs following surgery. Any recommended sitting heights will be discussed following your surgery.
Personal care

Washing

• When you first return home, we advise you to have a strip wash at a basin rather than getting into a bath or shower. You may want to consider having somewhere to sit while you wash; this could either be sitting on the toilet seat or using a suitable high stool/chair.
• You may use a shower within a cubicle when you are confident you can step into the shower safely and do not need a mobility aid to maintain your standing balance. We advise you to have someone with you the first time you access your shower.
• You may be able to use an over bath shower if you can be supported by a family member to step into the bath. We do not advise you attempt to step into or out of the bath by yourself. It is not advisable to attempt to sit down in the bath.
• Following surgery, do not attempt to lean forward to wash below your knees. Use a long-handled sponge to wash your feet or ask someone for help.
• Hair may be washed sitting on a stool leaning backwards at a bowl or basin. You will require assistance with this.

Dressing

• You must bring clothes that are loose fitting to wear in hospital. These are easier to get on and off; and it will also promote a sense of normality and be more comfortable when doing your rehabilitation. Please bring in flat non-slip footwear.
• When getting dressed, sit on a chair or bed. You will find it easier to dress the operated leg first and to undress it last. Avoid bending forward to reach your feet and do not bring your operated leg up to allow you to put shoes/socks on this side. The Occupational Therapist will demonstrate useful dressing aids and ways to dress.

Activities of daily living

Move essential items around the home to a height you can reach comfortably. You must not bend down to reach items from low level cupboards or drawers.

Place the things you use most often (e.g., tea/coffee, mugs and kettle) together in one place on the kitchen worktop to reduce the need to move around the kitchen unnecessarily.

Plan to have easy to prepare meals in the first few weeks after your surgery; this may include tinned items or frozen meals. Keep essential food items in easy to reach places, e.g., milk at waist height in the fridge.

Initially after discharge, you will not be able to carry items around the home if you are using a walking aid. You may need to consider sitting in the kitchen to have meals/drinks, or a bag carried across your body to transport items to the lounge/dining room in sealed containers.

Ask relatives or friends to help with heavier domestic tasks, i.e. laundry, vacuuming, making beds, housework and shopping, for the first few weeks after your operation.
Remove all loose-edged mats to prevent tripping.

For your comfort, avoid bending down to the floor to pick items up. Consider purchasing a “Helping hand” to enable you to pick up light items such as post or newspaper, etc.

**Animals**

If you own pets, consider the needs of your animals prior to admission and make any necessary arrangements for their care. Please note you may find it extremely uncomfortable in the first few weeks to bend down to the floor to tend to your pet.

**Leisure Activities**

When participating in leisure activities, be aware of the limitations of your hip or knee and adjust them accordingly.

**Frequently asked questions**

**When can I resume sport?**

Everyone is an individual and every sport challenges your new hip or knee in a different way. Your physiotherapist will be able to guide you as to when you can safely return to your activity.

**When can I drive?**

You need to be able to perform an emergency stop safely before resuming driving. You will need to contact your insurance company and notify them of your recent surgery to ensure when you return to driving you are covered appropriately. On average, most people returned to driving six weeks after surgery, once they have seen the physiotherapist or consultant.

**What to bring into hospital with you**

- Walking aids.
- Slippers or trainers – please, no mules or other backless footwear. Please note your feet and ankles may swell following surgery so your regular footwear may not fit.
- Loose fitting daytime clothing.
- Loose fitting nightwear and dressing gown.
- Personal toiletries.
- Long handled aids – shoehorn, Helping hand, clearly labelled with your name.
- Current medication in labelled boxes.
- Any splints/braces you usually wear.
- Glasses, hearing aid, dentures, etc., you usually wear.
- Money in small amounts for Patientline telephone and television – Frimley Park only.

Please do not bring valuables into the hospital.
Additional leaflets (on request)

- Getting in and out of a car
- Intimacy after hip surgery
- A selection of furniture suppliers in your area

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Legal Notice
Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible. Please therefore always check specific advice or any concerns you may have with your doctor.

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