



# 7

YOUR PRE-SURGERY CHECKLIST:

## Things To Do Before a Joint Replacement

While surgery may require a temporary change of pace, it certainly doesn't have to derail your life. Patients who plan well before their procedures increase their chance of a smooth recovery.

Joint replacement surgeries - such as a hip, knee, or shoulder replacement - require extra planning to help you regain mobility as quickly as possible. This checklist allows you to prepare for all that is involved — from asking questions before your procedure to getting the care you need afterward. Complete these seven steps for a successful surgery.

### 1 EXPAND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Your doctor is your greatest resource for information, but it never hurts to do your own research about the procedure too. Knowing what to expect can put your mind at ease and help you anticipate obstacles you may face along the way. If you know someone else who has gone through the same surgery and recovered well, ask them what was most helpful during recovery and what they wish they had known beforehand. No two surgery experiences will be the same, but insight from others can be valuable.

### 2 STAY ACTIVE BEFORE SURGERY

Physical activity leading up to your surgery date can help you strengthen muscles, promote healthy blood flow, and maintain your overall health. Daily stretching and walking will make a huge difference. If you are having a hip or knee replacement, building upper body strength can make using crutches or a walker post-surgery less taxing.



### 3 GET COMFORTABLE WITH YOUR CRUTCHES

After surgery, you will likely require either crutches or a walker to get around. While you shouldn't have to rely on these devices for long, it's a good idea to have them on hand before surgery so you can take them for a test drive. Go ahead and adjust them to fit your height and make sure your caregivers know where they are stored.

### 4 ENLIST THE HELP OF FAMILY OR FRIENDS

Helping hands will be essential in the days following your procedure. From designating someone who can provide transportation to having an "on-call" person for medical needs that may arise, being prepared with human resources is one of the best ways you can prepare for a successful recovery.

### 5 PLAN FOR PROPER NUTRITION

In the days following your surgery, eating healthy, well-balanced meals and staying hydrated will help you regain the strength needed to recover. Think about what you will eat, who will assist with food preparation and cleaning, and how you can best take care of yourself with a smart nutrition plan. Avoiding tobacco and alcohol during this time is of utmost importance.



### 6 PREVENT BLOOD CLOTS & MANAGE PAIN

Your doctor will go over the various medications you will need post-surgery. These may include blood thinners to prevent dangerous clotting, or painkillers to reduce the discomfort you experience. Speak with your doctor about which medications are right for you and ask questions about dosage, side effects, and how to access refills, if needed.



### 7

### PRE-BOOK YOUR TRANSITIONAL REHABILITATION CARE

Last but certainly not least, coordinate your rehabilitation services ahead of time. The right physical therapy is key to adjusting to life with a new joint replacement and becoming independent again. There are two options for transitional rehabilitation: inpatient or outpatient care.

#### INPATIENT CARE:

This comprehensive care model often helps patients heal quickly and return to normal activities faster after surgery. Staying in a rehabilitation facility with qualified care providers, you will receive around-the-clock support, medication reminders, and nutritious meals. Your physical therapy will also be handled on-site and any complications can be caught quickly, lessening pain and preventing issues that may occur after any major surgery.



#### OUTPATIENT CARE:

Outpatient care involves traveling from your home to a rehabilitation facility multiple times a week to work with a therapist, or having a therapist come to your home. Your therapist will walk you through exercises and give you specific exercises to do on your own. It is extremely important to stay on top of these routines.

If you live alone, do not have anyone to help with transportation, or live in a home with stairs, an inpatient option may be best. You may also want to consider inpatient rehabilitation if you have other medical conditions or think staying accountable for exercising on your own may be difficult.



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