

Total Knee Replacement

Information for Patients



This leaflet has been written to give you the right information about knee replacement surgery and what you can do to help with your recovery.

The following information and advice have been written in line with the physiotherapy and surgical teams at James Paget University Hospital.

If you have had your surgery at another hospital or you were given specific instructions that are different to the information below, you should consult your surgeon or physiotherapist before undertaking any of the exercises/advice.

What is a total knee replacement?

A total knee replacement is a major operation that involves replacing both the top and bottom parts of your knee joint with an artificial joint.

In most cases, your kneecap is not replaced.

What are the common symptoms?

Pain: A total knee replacement is a big operation and will be painful. The pain from your operation is likely to be with you for some time, possibly weeks or months, but this is normal and to be expected.

Swelling: After your operation, your knee will be swollen. The swelling will often hang around for some time, maybe weeks into months. However, just because the swelling is still there, doesn't mean there's a problem - it is quite normal and to be expected.

Limited movement of the knee: It is very normal to find that your knee doesn't move fully after your operation. Often, because it will be swollen and sore, your knee will be difficult to bend and straighten. This will be most obvious just after your operation but should improve with time.

What can I do to help myself?

Be kind to yourself: You have just had a major joint operation which is the largest thing you can ask your knee to undergo. Your body is amazing and can sort most issues out by itself, but the pain and difficulties can make you feel vulnerable, drained and sometimes a bit lost. Adapting and adjusting things that are sore, being patient with yourself and your knee, and gently working on getting it moving will all contribute to helping your operation become a success.

Pain control: Some people will choose to manage their pain with pain relief, whilst some may choose to avoid medication. Applying something warm/cold around your knee may also be useful in helping with some of the pain (do remember to wrap your hot water bottle/cold pack in a towel before applying it to your skin to avoid burns).

Get your knee moving: Moving you and your knee as much as is comfortable is essential for getting a good result from your operation. The sooner you can start exercising, taking some weight and walking on your new knee, the quicker you will likely progress.

Is there anything I shouldn't do with my new knee? Unless you have been specifically told by the hospital to avoid certain things, there are no things that you need to avoid after having a knee replacement.

Will it get better?

For most people, a knee replacement may not be a pleasant experience but reassuringly, it does have the potential to get better. By understanding the issue as best you can and by adjusting what is sore to then allow you to explore some exercise/s, is often the best formula for success.

If you would like to know more about knee replacements or find a greater choice of exercises, you can explore our dedicated webpage.

Search online: [Norfolk and Waveney MSK services](#) 'knee replacement'

Exercises



On the bed. Slide your heel towards your bottom and away again.
Complete little and often throughout the day.



Place a chair in front of you with a cushion or rolled up towel on it. Put your heel on the cushion/towel and allow your knee to relax.
Complete little and often throughout the day.



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