

Total Hip Replacement



Information for Patients

This leaflet has been written to give you the right information about hip 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 hip replacement?

A total hip replacement is a major operation that involves replacing both the ball and socket parts of your hip joint with an artificial joint.

For differing reasons, some people may only have the ball part of their joint replaced (this is called a hemiarthroplasty). The information contained in this page is relevant to both types of surgery.

What are the common symptoms?

Pain: A hip replacement is a big operation and therefore it is normal to experience pain afterwards. The discomfort from your operation could last weeks or months.

Swelling: Swelling after a total hip replacement is not normally something that causes too much of a problem. The swelling is normally around the scar but can travel down your leg and may hang around for some time, maybe weeks into months.

Difficulty walking: It is very normal to find walking a bit of a challenge after having a hip replaced, and you may find that you need to use elbow crutches or a walking stick to help you in the early stages of your recovery.

What can I do to help myself?

Be kind to yourself: A total hip replacement is a significant operation and you and your body will have to recover afterwards. Frustration with not being able to do things that you've always done is often hard to accept, however by adapting, pacing or doing things differently, most jobs can still get done whilst you recover.

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 hip 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 hip moving: Moving you and your hip 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 hip, the quicker you will likely progress.

Build it back up again: Movement is medicine for your body and your hips are no different. Once your hips feel a little calmer, it is a good idea to start to 'build it back up again'. What this means is that once the hip is able to tolerate some gentle strengthening exercise, then it is worth starting some.

Will it get better?

For most people, a hip replacement may not be a pleasant experience but reassuringly, it does have the potential to be 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 hip replacements or find a greater choice of exercises, you can explore our dedicated webpage.

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

Exercises



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



Lying on the bed. Keeping your heel on the bed, slide your leg out to the side. Using a plastic bag or magazine under your heel might help your heel slide easier. Move only as far as you feel comfortable.

Complete little and often throughout the day.



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