**Outpatient Hip and Knee Replacement Tips**

You have made the decision to have your joint replacement as an outpatient, congratulations! This means that you are healthy enough, motivated, and have a great team to help you through. And you will get through! The first couple of days are the hardest, but you are ready and it is all worth it in the end. After your joint replacement, swelling, bruising, and pain are all normal and expected. What follows are some bits of advice and quick reference tips for what to expect as you get through the first few days at home.

1. **ICE** - I cannot emphasize the importance of ice enough. It helps decrease pain and swelling, which always go hand in hand.
   1. USE IT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, there is no limit. Apply the ice anywhere around your hip or knee simply checking every twenty minutes or so to make sure there is no blanching or skin discoloration resembling frost bite. Otherwise, keep the ice coming.
2. **Bandages** – The tan, rubbery dressing STAYS ON. You may see some spots of blood through the dressing, but as long as it isn’t leaking, leave it on and feel free to shower right over it. If you have bleeding through the bandage, apply compression over the bandage with tape and gauze and let me know.
   1. KNEES – Leave your ace wrap on for AT LEAST 24 Hours, then feel free to remove it and any white padding or gauze. As you unwrap, you will see the rubbery dressing that you will leave on. Now that the ace bandage is removed, you will be able to feel that ice even better.
3. **Transitions** – I am talking about changing from lying to sitting and sitting to standing. TAKE YOUR TIME! You will move more slowly than you are used to and that is normal. Pause at each step to let your body, and blood pressure catch up. Taking time to adjust will help you avoid the lightheadedness, dizziness, and falls.
   1. **TIP** – STAY WELL HYDRATED. Blood loss is a normal part of surgery that you will rebuild with time. In the beginning, the “tank” is a little low, so drink plenty of fluids to keep the tank and your blood pressure normal.
4. **Activity** – Give yourself time to heal, but get up and get going, too. It is a balance, start low and work your way toward more activity day to day.
   1. **TIP** – Short frequent trips are better than long walks. Get up EVERY HOUR while you are awake to move around, even if it is just down the hall or around the kitchen table. This will keep the joint loose. A stiff joint is also usually a painful joint. Most people will say that it is hard to get going, but after you do, the joint actually feels better.
5. **PAIN CONTROL**-Last but most certainly not least. IT GETS BETTER! Take a deep breath and remind yourself why you had your joint replaced in the first place. The first days are hard, keep breathing, keep up with the ICE (see tip #1) and realize that this pain will get better.
   1. **Pain** – Everybody handles pain and pain medications differently. Some may take very few medications and some a lot, so it is unfair for you to compare yourself to anybody you know who has been through it. You, too, will get through it.
   2. **STAY ON TOP OF THE PAIN** – It is easier to stay up than catch up. For the first few days it is best to preempt the pain by taking meds on a schedule. You can start to taper off usually by day 4-5. In the first couple of weeks you may still want something in the evening or with your physical therapy.
      1. **Example**:Every 4 hours take 1-2 Oxycodone and Tylenol, wait two hours, then every 4 hours take an NSAID (ibuprofen or naproxen)
         1. **8am Oxycodone and Tylenol**
         2. **10am Ibuprofen**
         3. **Noon Oxycodone and Tylenol**
         4. **2pm Ibuprofen, etc.**
   3. **Elevation** – Elevate your extremity above your heart whenever you can. This usually means laying on the couch or building a ramp of pillows to get your foot and knee above your heart so the swelling can drain out. LESS SWELLING= LESS PAIN. It is very common for people to have swelling in the extremity from the groin to the toes.
   4. **ICE** – I feel like I have mentioned this before, but keep up with the ice and you will do a better job controlling your pain.
   5. **Muscle spasms** – many people experience muscle spasms after the surgery. You will have a few ROBAXIN(methocarbamol) to take if needed. Massage, stretching, and movement will also help get rid of the spasms.

Get Well, you can do it!! Never hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Best contact: 651-968-5295 or 651-968-5201.

OrthoQuick: Open 8am-8pm, 651-968-5806

After Hours On-Call: 651-968-5200

Emergencies: 911