



Preparing Your Home

Although the goal of your total joint surgery is to function independently in your home, and in your activities of daily living, you will achieve this goal only several months after the surgery. Until then, you must adapt your home to your limited mobility during the first months after the total hip or knee surgery. Your home should be safe and easy to live in during these months.

BATHROOM

- Elevated toilet seats or bedside commodes are necessary for all persons who have had a total hip replacement. An elevated toilet seat also may be indicated if you have had a total knee replacement or if you have had difficulty getting on and off the toilet before your surgery due to arthritis in other joints. If an elevated toilet seat is recommended for home use, a social worker will arrange for that equipment.
- Bathing can be accomplished in several ways:
 - A. You may choose to take sponge baths.
 - B. If you have a tub/shower combination in your home, you will need to adapt it by obtaining a tub seat and a handheld shower nozzle. The tub seat will allow for easy access into the tub area for showering. If you have sliding doors on the tub/shower, remove them for your recovery period. Removing the sliding doors will allow for easier and safer entry into the tub/shower.
 - C. If you have a walk-in shower, use a shower chair. Avoid using a low shower chair.
- If the bathroom is not located on the main level of your home, you may need to obtain a portable commode for your recovery period.

BEDROOM

- Having a bed on the main level of your home is recommended for your recovery period. You may need to move a bed to the first floor on a temporary basis.
- Utilize beds with standard mattresses. Avoid water beds, especially if you have had a hip replacement. Water beds are not recommended for any joint surgery patient because of the increased difficulty in getting in and out of them.

FURNITURE

- Use a firm, straight back chair with strong arms for sitting. This type of chair assists you in safely getting from the sitting to standing position or standing to sitting position.
- Avoid low, heavily-cushioned chairs. Chair heights should be 21 inches or higher. Specific heights will be discussed with you during your hospital stay. A chair that is too low or heavily-cushioned will cause you to flex your hip more than 90 degrees when you sit.



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IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY

Before surgery, arrange your kitchen cupboards, refrigerator, closets, and dresser drawers so that items are at waist level. This is necessary to eliminate the need for bending, reaching and twisting. Here are suggestions of some modifications you can use to improve accessibility:

- Place frequently used pots and pans at waist level.
- Remove food items from crispers in your refrigerator. Place the food items on the upper shelves of your refrigerator.
- Arrange your clothes/shoes so they are in dresser drawers or closets at waist level.
- Place towels and toiletries at waist level.

OBTAINING EQUIPMENT

- If you know friends or family members who have had total joint replacements in the past, you may want to inquire if they have equipment they would be willing to lend you.
- You may consult social worker/case manager to determine where your equipment can be purchased. Some equipment items may be covered by Medicare. Equipment that requires installation should be obtained prior to your hospital stay so your home can be prepared for your return. The shower nozzle is an example of equipment that requires installation.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Remove throw rugs from your home to prevent falls that can result from walkers and crutches that can become easily entangled in them.
- Prepare meals ahead of time and freeze them in preparation for your recovery period.
- Use a night-light to illuminate walkways and help prevent falls should you get up during the night.

Following these recommendations should enable you to return to your home and function independently and safely after your hospital stay.