

Post-op Total Hip Replacement Exercises

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Regular exercise and physical therapy after a hip replacement are of key importance when it comes to returning to your everyday activities. In order to achieve a full recovery, it's important to follow a regular exercise routine beginning within days of surgery. Early postoperative exercises are important since they increase circulation to your legs and feet and prevent blood clots. It's also important to begin early strengthening of your muscles and improve hip movement while reducing postoperative pain.

Early Postoperative Exercises:

1. **Ankle Pumps:** Slowly pull your foot up towards your body, squeeze and hold for 3 seconds. Now point your foot away from your body, squeeze and hold for 3 seconds. Continue for 5-10 minutes multiple times per day.
2. **Gluteal Sets:** Tighten buttock muscles and hold for a count of 5, 10 times, 3 or 4 times a day.
3. **Abduction Exercises:** Lying on your back, slide your surgical leg out to the side as far as you can and then back to midline. Repeat 10 times, 3 or 4 times per day.
4. **Quad Sets:** Place a towel roll under your heel. Pull the toes up and tighten the quadriceps muscle (top of thigh), and press the back of the knee into the table or bed. Hold for 3 seconds and repeat 10 times, 3 or 4 times per day.
5. **Straight Leg Raises:** Lie on your back with your surgical leg straight and your opposite knee bent. Keep the surgical leg completely straight by doing a quad set straight off the table until your knees are level. Slowly lower the leg while attempting to touch your calf to the table or floor before your heel.

A full recovery takes several months as your hip muscles have been weakened by the pain you had prior to surgery as well as the post-operative pain and swelling and surgical procedure itself. It's extremely important to continue with a more advanced strengthening program following the acute stages of rehabilitation in order to fully recover and return to your maximum level of function. The following exercises are important during the advanced stages of therapy as well as part of a home exercise program:

Advanced Exercises and Activities:

1. **Standing Hip Abduction:** Hold onto a stable surface. Be sure your hip, knee and foot are pointing straight forward. With your knee straight, lift your surgical leg out to the side. Slowly lower your leg so your foot is back on the floor. Repeat 10 times, 3 to 4 times a day.
2. **Standing Hip Extension:** Hold onto a stable surface. Be sure your hip, knee and foot are pointing straight ahead. Lift your surgical leg backward slowly. Try to keep your back straight.

Hold for 3 seconds and allow your foot to return to starting position. Repeat 10 times, 3 to 4 times a day.

3. Bridge: Lie on your back with both legs bent. Tighten buttocks and raise your hips off the floor or table as high as you can. Hold for 3 seconds, and then slowly lower back to the table. Repeat 10 times, 3 to 4 times a day.
4. Quarter Squats: Hold onto a solid stable surface. Keep your feet flat on the floor shoulders apart. Squat as if sitting in a seat behind you without allowing your knees to bend more than 90 degrees. Then stand up using as little help from your arms as possible. Repeat 10 times, 3 to 4 times a day.
5. Walk/Stationary Bike Riding: One of the best ways to stay active and mobile while continuing to strengthen your lower extremities is to walk or ride a stationary bike for 20 to 30 minutes, 3 to 4 times a week.

All of these exercises should be performed under the direct supervision of a trained physical therapist until you are safe and independent with a home program. Each post-op hip replacement program and exercises are individualized to meet your needs so be sure to consult with your Physician or Physical Therapist prior to beginning any exercise program.