

## Total Hip Replacement Precautions

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After a total hip replacement, you need to know the surgical approach taken by your doctor, the precautions associated with your procedure and what to expect in physical therapy. With just a few simple tips and a little bit of knowledge, your road to recovery after a total hip replacement can be easier than you thought.

Many times a doctor will use a posterior-lateral approach, which means they will open the hip joint by cutting through the gluteal muscles in the back of your hip and opening your joint. This approach is what will dictate any “hip precautions” that you have. Many times there are three simple rules to follow:

1. No hip flexion past 90 degrees- Hip flexion is the same motion as marching your feet up in the air. 90 degrees of hip flexion is roughly making an L position at your hip.
2. No hip adduction past midline- Midline of your body would be an imaginary line drawn that splits your body into right and left halves. You want to avoid crossing your legs.
3. No internal rotation of hip- Internal rotation of the hip, in a lying position, would be moving your foot, starting with the toes straight up to the ceiling then rotating the toes towards the opposite leg. You may find it helpful to sleep with a pillow between your legs so your legs don't cross or internally rotate in the middle of the night.

Physical therapy typically starts the day after surgery. The first day of therapy is often spent gathering information about your medical history, changing bandages and teaching you a few simple exercises to help you regain your range of motion and strength of the hip. In the initial days following your surgery, it's important to ice your hip to reduce swelling and try to regain motion by completing the exercises that are given to you by the physical therapist. It is also important to try and get up and move around a little throughout the day. Often times you begin walking with a walker, then transition to a cane and finally to no assistive device. What you walk with depends on your prior level of functionality and as well as your safety in using each device.

Following these precautions as well as knowing what to expect makes your recovery from a total hip replacement more manageable. It is also important to be involved in your recovery so be sure to ask your doctor and physical therapist any questions you have.