

Joint Surgery Tips

Ten Tips for a Better Recovery

- 1. Everyone recovers at their own rate.**

Pay attention to what your body is able to do. Try not to worry about whether you're getting better at a normal rate. Try not to hurry the process.
- 2. Get plenty of rest.**

You will be tired when you get home and it may take several weeks to get back to your old routine. Expect to sleep longer and take more naps. Rest will help your body recover.
- 3. Do your exercises.**

Your doctor, nurses and therapists will give you safe exercises to strengthen your body and help your new joint function. Do them just as they're prescribed. Their difficulty and number of repetitions will be increased as you get stronger. Be sure to take pain medication before exercising and plan to rest afterwards.
- 4. Manage your pain.**

Take pain medication as prescribed. Your body needs to work at healing, not enduring pain. Don't be surprised if you have pain in other parts of your body as you change the way you move. If pain increases or changes radically let your doctor or physical therapist know. Watch the video below for more information.
- 5. Keep helpful tools handy.**

Many devices can make daily tasks a bit easier. Check with your physical therapist or others for recommendations. Look for walkers with carry bags, canes and crutches with good tips, grabbers or tongs, a long-handled bath brush, long handled shoe horns, and shoes that do not lace and have good traction.
- 6. Ask for help.**

Make a list of people who can help and what they have offered to do. Keep their numbers handy and request help when you need it. CaringBridge and CarePages are websites that let you provide updates to family and friends.
- 7. Keep a calendar and notepad.**

You may be forgetful after surgery. Mark appointments on a calendar and keep a pencil and notepad with you to jot things down when they occur to you. Your list may include groceries, things to do, questions for your care team or other reminders.

8. **Ready your bathroom.**

Stepping in and out of a tub is precarious. Make sure you have non-skid bath mats, strong handrails, and a hand-held shower head. A toilet riser may be needed for hip and knee joint replacements. You may need a sturdy, waterproof chair use while drying and dressing.

9. **Be prepared for changes.**

We've identified three particularly difficult times during recovery and what you can do.

A few days after your surgery, you may have a sudden realization of how weak you are, and how difficult it is to move and care for yourself.

When you feel stronger and less tired, you may be tempted to stop using a cane or crutch, reach, bend, twist or lift before your physician has approved these activities.

What to do: be patient and use caution.

After release from your surgeon's care you may be tempted to stop doing your exercises or forget the rules you were given. Your new joint will always need special care.

What to do: make exercise a part of your life, keep your weight down and your activity up, post the rules and reread them periodically.

10. **Stay connected to Arnot Health.**

We care about your well-being and want to hear about your recovery. Join us for our next joint reunion outing to celebrate your success. Look for an invitation in the mail or contact us.

Health on Demand

If you have questions or concerns, a registered nurse is available daily from Health on Demand: 607-737-4499.