Exercises after Hip Replacement

Your therapist will teach you some exercises you need to do before you leave the hospital. Other exercises will be started weeks after your surgery. Follow the guidelines listed unless directed differently by your doctor or therapist.

Exercises started in the hospital

Follow the direction of your doctor or therapist for these exercises.

- You may need help with these exercises. Have a family member come to the hospital to work with your therapist to learn how to help you, if you are going home.
- Exercise 3 times a day, for 10 to 15 repetitions of each exercise. Remember to do all exercises slowly.

- **Hip Flexion**
  
  Use a plastic trash bag or a small board sprinkled with powder under your leg to reduce friction. A small towel under the heel may also help.

  1. While lying on your back, slide your heel toward your buttocks and bend at the knee.
  2. Do not lift your heel off the surface or turn your leg in or out. Keep your knee pointed toward the ceiling.
  3. Pause, and then slide your heel forward and straighten the knee.

More on next page ➔

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- **Hip Abduction**

  Use a plastic trash bag or a small board sprinkled with powder under your leg to reduce friction. A small towel under the heel may also help.

  1. Lie on your back and have your legs straight. Keep your toes pointed toward the ceiling.

  2. Slide your operative leg out to the side, like opening a pair of scissors. Then slowly return your leg to the starting position. Do not cross the midline of your body.

- **Short Arc Quads (Blanket Roll or Coffee Can exercise)**

  1. Place a 3 pound coffee can or blanket roll under the knee of your operated leg.

  2. With your thigh resting on the can, lift your heel off the bed and straighten your knee as much as possible.

  3. Pause, and then lower heel.

  This exercise can also be done on your non-operative side.
Standing Exercises

- Use a counter, steady table or chair for support for these exercises.
- Stand up straight while doing these exercises and be sure the motion is from the hip.
- Do each exercise slowly.
- Do these exercises 2 to 3 times each day on your operative leg. Repeat each exercise 10 times.

- **Leg forward**
  1. Tighten the muscles in the front of your upper leg.
  2. Keeping the muscles tight and your knee straight, lift your leg forward.
  3. Hold and then lower your leg.
  4. Relax and repeat.

- **March in Place**
  1. Stand with your feet slightly apart.
  2. Lift your knee up as you breathe out, trying to form a right angle at the hip. Relax your knee and focus on bending your hip.
  3. Lower your leg down and relax, then repeat.

The next exercises are to be started 3 weeks after surgery or as directed by your doctor or therapist.
- **Leg to the side**
  1. Move your leg out to the side, keeping your knee straight.
  2. Hold and then lower your leg back to the starting position.

- **Leg back (Not for anterior approach – check with your doctor or therapist)**
  1. Stand up straight, facing the chair or table and hold on for support and balance.
  2. Keeping your knee straight, bring your leg back from your hip, tightening your buttocks muscles.
  3. Hold and then relax and return to your starting position.

**Exercises to be started 6 weeks after surgery**

Start these exercises **only** after your doctor’s approval at your follow up visit.

- **Straight leg raise**
  1. Lie on your back and have your operative leg straight. The other leg should be bent.
  2. Slowly raise your leg off the bed about 12 to 24 inches, keeping the knee straight.
  3. Hold and then lower the leg slowly.
Side leg lift

1. Lie on your side with your operative leg on top. Place a pillow between your legs.
2. Bend the lower leg if needed for support but keep the top leg straight.
3. Raise the top leg up about 12 inches, keeping the knee straight and the hip very slightly forward.
4. Hold and then lower the leg slowly.

Hip extension (Not for anterior approach – check with your doctor or therapist)

1. Lie on your stomach with your legs straight.
2. Keeping your knee straight, lift your operative leg off the bed.
3. Hold and then slowly lower the leg.

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.