Using Equipment to Help in Daily Activities after Your Total Hip Replacement

If you had posterior approach hip replacement surgery, you need to follow these precautions to protect your new hip:

- Do not cross your legs at the knees.
- Do not twist at the hip.
- Do not bend your hip past 90 degrees. This means you are not to bend over at your waist or lift your knee higher than your hip if you are sitting.

You need to use adaptive equipment to help you with your daily activities because you will not be able to bend forward.

If you had anterior approach hip replacement surgery, you may want to purchase adaptive equipment to make some tasks easier.

Reaching

To get items from cabinets or off the floor, use a reacher. Rearrange your cupboards so that items you use most often are within convenient reach. If you cannot get an item with your reacher, ask someone for help. Do not bend over to pick up something from the floor.

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Learn more about your health care.
Dressing

Since you are not to bend past 90 degrees, use adaptive devices to be as independent as you can when dressing.

- Wear slip-on shoes or use elastic shoelaces so you will not have to bend over to tie your shoes.
- A long-handled shoe horn will help you put shoes on or take stockings and socks off.
- A dressing stick may be used to put on pants.
  - Use the hook to catch the waist of underwear or pants.
  - Place your operative leg first in the pants when dressing, and take it out last when undressing.
  - Pull the slacks up over your knees.
  - Stand with the walker in front of you and pull your slacks up.

- Socks and Stockings
  A stocking aid will make it easier to put on socks or stockings. Elastic stockings may be ordered for you.
  - Slide the sock or stocking onto the stocking aid. Be sure the heel is at the back of the plastic and the toe is tight against the end.
Secure the sock in place with the notches on the plastic piece. Do not pull the top of the sock over the top of the plastic piece.

Holding onto the cords, drop the stocking aid out in front of the operated foot.

Slip your foot into the sock and pull it on.

Release the sock from the notches on the plastic piece using your dressing stick or reacher.

To take the stocking or sock off, use the hook on the dressing stick or reacher to hook the back of the heel and push the sock off your foot.

**Using the Bathroom**

- A raised toilet seat may be helpful to you at home. It will keep you from bending too far when sitting or standing. The higher seat also makes it easier to stand up from the toilet.

- Clean yourself after toileting as you are used to, just be careful not to bend too far forward or twist too much at the hip.

**Bathing**

Unless you have a walk-in shower, you will have to learn a new method for getting in and out of the bathtub. **Do not sit down into the tub for 6 to 12 weeks.**

- If possible, have someone help you the first time you bathe at home.

- You may sponge bathe until you are comfortable or have help to shower.
• If you have a walk-in shower, you may stand and shower as long as you feel steady and balanced.

• If you have a tub shower and need to sit to bathe, you will need a shower bench. Make sure the shower bench is placed firmly in the tub. Have someone adjust the height of the shower bench so it is as tall as it can be to allow you to rest your feet comfortably on the floor of the tub when you are sitting.

• Have someone put non-skid strips or pads in your bathtub for safety.

• Have a secure place to put your soap to avoid dropping it. Try soap on a rope or a deep soap dish. These items are sold at many department stores.

• Use a long-handled sponge or bath brush to reach your lower legs and feet without bending more than 90 degrees at your hips.

• A portable shower hose may be helpful.

• Turn on cold water first to avoid burning yourself.

**Using a Shower Bench**

1. Place the shower bench firmly in the tub. Stand with your back toward the bathtub. Be sure to have someone with you to hold the bench steady.

2. Slowly lower yourself onto the bath bench, sliding your operative foot forward as you sit.
3. Lean your trunk back as someone helps lift your operative leg over the edge of the tub. By leaning back, you will not bend your hip past 90 degrees.

4. Slide back and make sure you are in a safe sitting position. Have your helper lower your foot to the floor of the tub.

5. To get out of the tub, have someone lift your operative leg out and place your feet flat on the floor before you stand.

**Standing Tub Transfer**

*If you had anterior approach* hip replacement surgery, step into the tub as usual.

1. Place a stool or bench in the tub in case you tire quickly and need to sit down. Stand with your good leg next to the bathtub.

2. Place your cane or crutch into the tub first, or use grab bars if they are available.
3. Put your weight on the crutch or cane and step into the tub with your good leg. On your operative side, bend your knee back to step into the tub. **Do not lift your knee up and over the tub** because it could harm your hip.

4. Bring the other crutch or cane into the tub.

5. To get out, turn around and repeat the same procedure. Put the crutch or cane on the good side out first, then the good leg. Then bring your operative leg out, and then crutch or cane on the operative side. Be careful standing on the wet tub surface.

**Getting In and Out of Bed**

- You will get in and out of bed on the same side as you had surgery.

- A hospital bed may be needed at home. Your physical therapist, nurse and case manager will talk with you about this if needed.

- Some people find it helpful to wear pajamas made of silky materials to help them slide more easily on the sheets.

- You will need someone to carry your operative leg as you use your arms and non-operative leg to scoot yourself in and out of bed.

**Sitting**

Use a **hip cushion** to help you sit safely and not break your hip precautions. The cushion adds height to help keep your knees lower than your operative hip when you are sitting. It also may make it easier for you to stand up. If you are not sure about the height of a chair, put your cushion on it to be safe.
Getting Into a Car

It is important to know how to get into the car in a safe manner. It is better for you to ride in a mid-size or large car with regular bench seats rather than bucket seats. **Use a thick pillow or cushion.** On a long trip, be sure to make frequent rest stops, about every 30 minutes. Get out and shift your weight from one leg to the other or walk around. The best choice after a total hip replacement is to ride in the **back seat.**

**To get into the back seat,** first lower onto the seat in a semi-reclining position. Have someone support your operative leg as you use your non-operative leg to scoot yourself farther back across the seat. You may want to have a pillow to put behind your back to lean on. It is best to have the operative leg against the seat back.

- If you had the **right hip** replaced, get in on the **passenger’s side** back seat.
- If you had the **left hip** replaced, get in on the **driver’s side** back seat.

**To get into the front seat,** enter the car on the passenger side and make sure the seat is as far back as possible. Recline the seat back as much as you can so you will be able to scoot up the back of the seat.

1. Stand with your back toward the car.
   Put your operative leg out ahead of you and slowly sit.
2. Have someone lift your operative leg into the car as you scoot up the back of the seat. **You must scoot up the seat as your operative leg is lifted** into the car to prevent bending your hip more than 90 degrees.

3. When the operative leg is on the floor of the car, scoot back down to the seat and adjust the seat back up a small amount.

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](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).