

KNEE REPLACEMENT SURGERY

Knee replacements can be full or partial.

Full replacement –the lower femur replaced with metal, top of tibia replaced (softer and with padding) and sometimes the underside of the patella, a partial replacement would be one or the other of these. The person is usually in the hospital for 3-5 days and in Physical Therapy (PT) for 4-8 weeks. If you know them at the time of surgery encourage them to do the FULL time on their PT.

There are few restrictions on range of motion (ROM), however, it is very difficult to get full ROM back. A long term goal for knee flexion is 0 degrees to 120 degrees. Sometimes the person cannot do full extension - straight leg at 0 degrees, and some people don't gain more than 90 degrees of flexion. I can't stress enough how different results can be for various people.

Precautions:

Stop at ROM, don't push.

Kneeling can be difficult, in some cases not at all.

NO rotation in the knee.

Post surgery:

Tracking and functional movement patterns need to be worked with.

Get in the pool and walk!

Some people start to develop low back and SI joint pain - this is usually due to leg length discrepancy. I always encourage people to research the surgeon extremely well, and to discuss areas of concern. I think the leg length discrepancy is avoidable, but I had one client who was starting to get into distress during surgery and they had to rush to close up. The result was a leg length discrepancy and chronic pain in her back.

GENERAL KNEE SURGERY GUIDELINES

Ask: Date of surgery

Guideline for recovery and knitting process is six weeks for tissue that has good blood supply, for example skin and muscle have good vascular supply and heal much more quickly than tendons or ligaments, which are less vascular. In joint replacements the time is usually at least 3 months, as there is much more tissue to heal, scar tissue forming and bone involvement.

Presurgery

Massage area so skin stays vital and healthy helping to increase circulation, can help heal from surgery more quickly.

How long healing takes depends on the level of health of the person when the surgery happened. Get an understanding of person's health and previous surgical intervention.

Re-starting Activity

Ask: Movement restrictions and activity limitations **recommended by their healthcare provider** - immediate and permanent restrictions.

Before starting activity heal fully first, this will decrease the amount of complications. Knee replacements are a different story as the scar tissue starts immediately, so it is a race against the clock to get as much flexion and extension as possible as quickly as you can.

Let your student/client educate you about living with the condition they have, they are our best teachers!