

Tips for Bilateral Joint Replacement Surgery

Prepare your body

After surgery, you will need to use your arms and stomach muscles to move in and out of bed.



Talk to a physiotherapist about exercises to strengthen:

- Your upper body – ex: chair push-ups, light weights
- Your lower body – ex: exercise in water, tubing or weights
- Your core (deep abdominal) muscles

❖ **Practice moving from lying to sitting with straight legs.** One way to do this:

- using your arms, first press into the bed with your elbows
- lift your head and shoulders
- place your hands behind the small of your back
- straighten both elbows until you are in a sitting position

❖ **Practice using long straps to move your legs across the bed and onto the floor.** You can use the belt from your dressing gown or tie two neckties together.

Prepare your home

After surgery, you may be discharged home or to a rehab hospital. This decision is based on your level of function and home situation. It is important that your home is ready for when you are discharged. All seating surfaces (chair, wheelchair, toilet, bed, etc.) should be at least two inches above your knee cap.

Equipment that people with bilateral replacements have found useful includes:

- bedside assist rail
- raised toilet seat with arm rests
- high-density foam cushion to raise all surfaces you sit on (furniture, wheelchair)
- chair with arm rests
- long-handled reacher, shoehorn and sponge (32")
- adjustable shower chair that can be brought to a good height
- wheelchair with high-density foam cushion
 - knees - wheelchair with elevating leg rests
 - hips - wheelchair with a reclining back rest
 - these specialty wheelchairs are rarely available through the Red Cross so you will probably need to rent one specific to your needs



During Your Hospital Stay

In the hospital, a physiotherapist will be working with you to get you moving as soon as possible. You will sit on the side of the bed and start bed exercises. You will walk with a walker and slowly progress your physical activity. By Day 2, you will be more independent getting in and out of bed. You will continue to walk further and sit for longer periods of time outside of the bed. You can expect a 5-7 day hospital stay.

You may hear ‘use your strong leg’ when it comes to moving yourself after joint replacement surgery. When you’re having both legs done, this may seem like strange advice. Usually, one of your legs is stronger or less painful than the other; call it your ‘strong leg’. When it comes to using stairs or dressing yourself, follow the usual instructions keeping your ‘strong leg’ in mind.

