

Hip Fracture Recovery Guide

Valley Regional Hospital

How much weight are you allowed to put on your operated leg?

- ☐ Weight-bearing, as tolerated
- ☐ Protected weight-bearing
(as much weight as you want but you must use a walker)
- ☐ Partial weight-bearing: _____
- ☐ No weight-bearing



Contents

What does my hip joint look like?.....	2
What does my fracture look like?	3
What type of surgery do I need?	4
During my hospital stay	6
How can I get comfortable?	6
How do I get into bed?	7
How do I get out of bed?	7
Walking after surgery	7
How do I sit down?	8
How do I stand up?.....	8
After my surgery	9
What are the possible complications?	9
Osteoporosis	9
At home.....	10
Discharge planning	10
How do I climb stairs?	11
To get in and out of a car:	12
When can I switch from a walker to a cane?	12
Outpatient physiotherapy	13
What equipment will I need at home?	13
Bathing	13
Going to the bathroom	13
Getting dressed	14
How do I get my home ready?	14
How do I stay safe at home? (preventing falls)	15
Home support and nursing services	15
My exercises.....	16
My exercise schedule	17

Hip Fracture Recovery Guide:

Valley Regional Hospital

This guide will help you and your caregivers understand what your hip joint looks like and how it works. It will also give you guidelines to follow to help you recover after you leave the hospital.

These guidelines must be followed for at least 6 weeks after your surgery, or until you follow up with your surgeon. A follow-up appointment with your surgeon will be scheduled about 6 weeks after your surgery, or when your surgeon decides is best for you.

To avoid problems after your hip surgery, it is important that you and your caregivers understand the information in this guide.

Please ask to talk with your rehab team, or contact Rehabilitation Services about any questions or concerns that you have:

- › Phone: 902-679-2770

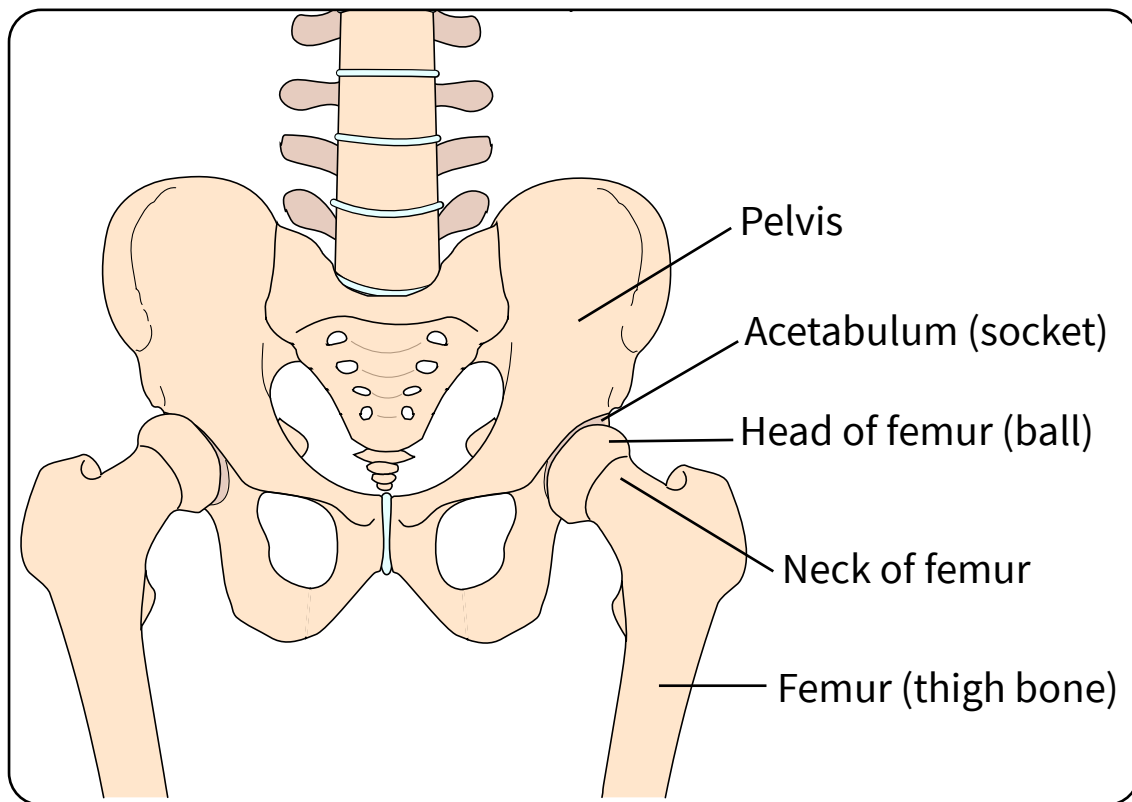
What does my hip joint look like?

The hip joint is called a “ball-and-socket” joint. The “ball” is the rounded head of the thigh bone (femur). The “socket” is the cup-shaped part of the pelvis (acetabulum). The femur fits in the acetabulum.

The ball-and-socket structure of the joint:

- › Lets the hip move freely
- › Gives stability and support so the hip can move in many directions
- › Lets you stand up and carry your body weight

The muscles and ligaments around this joint also help to strengthen and support it, allowing you to stand up and move.

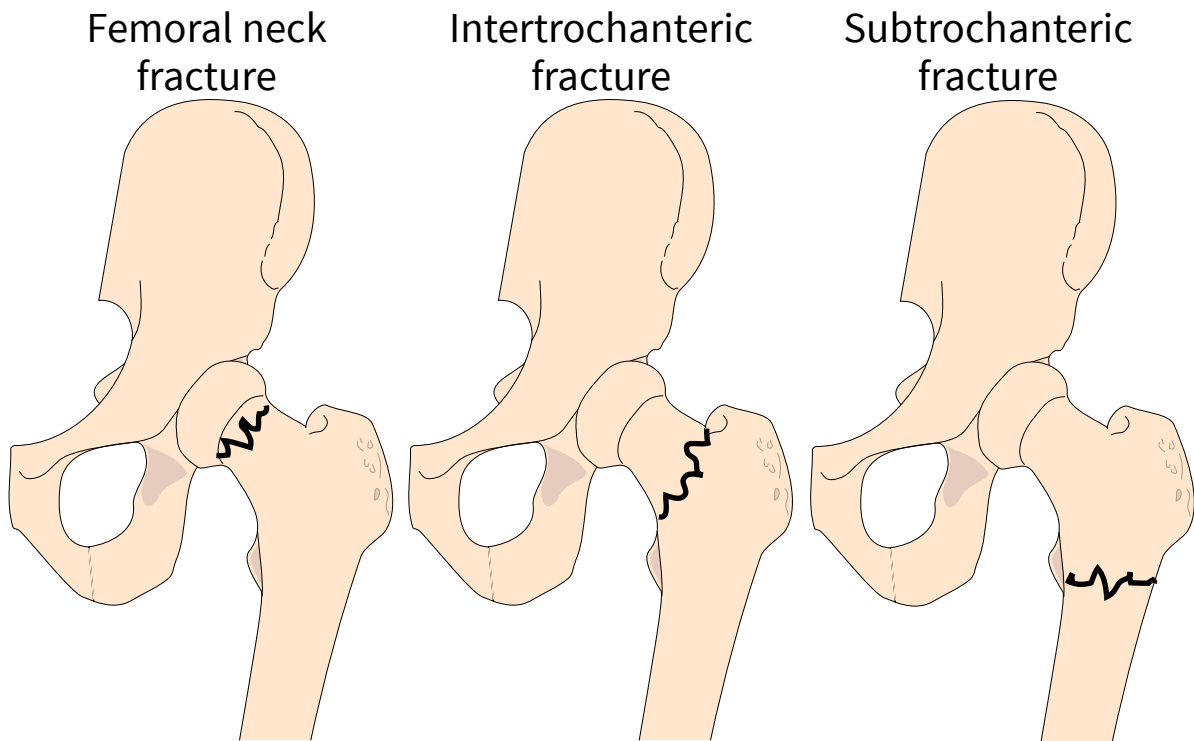


What does my fracture look like?

A hip fracture is a break in the upper part of the femur (thigh bone).
Orthopedic surgeons often use an X-ray to:

- › Check for a fracture
- › Find out what type of fracture it is
- › Decide how to repair it

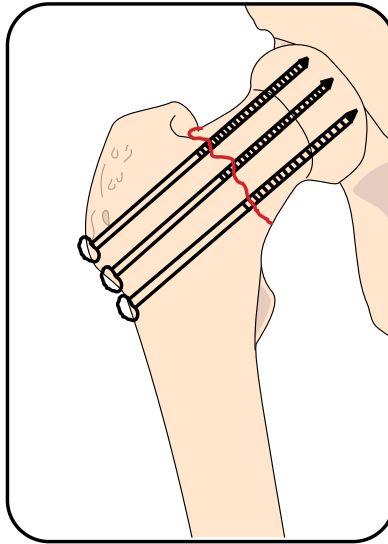
Your fracture likely looks like 1 of the pictures below:



What type of surgery do I need?

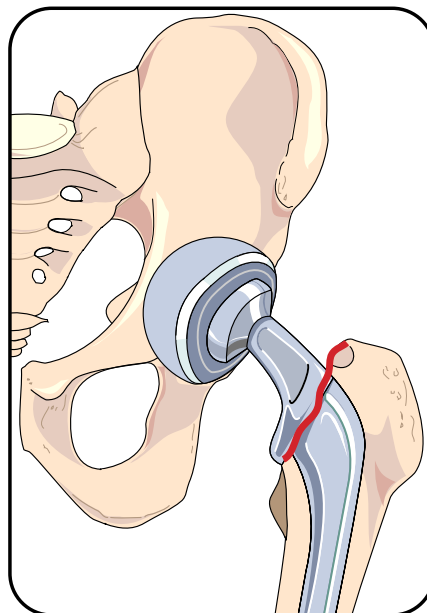
☐ Asnis screws

Your surgeon may use several screws to hold the bone in place. This repair is often used for a fracture through the neck of the femur (femoral neck fracture).



☐ Bipolar hip replacement

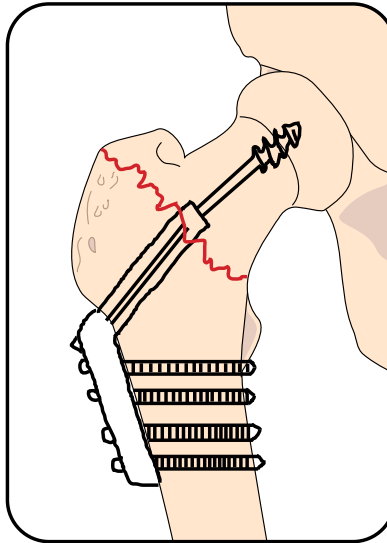
This is also called a partial hip replacement. The surgeon replaces the top of the femur with a prosthesis (artificial thigh bone). This repair is often used for a fracture through the neck of the femur (transcervical fracture).



What type of surgery do I need?

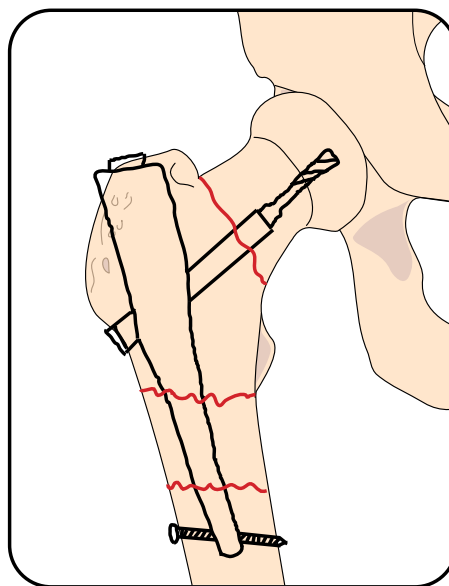
☐ Dynamic hip screw (DHS)

A DHS uses screws and a metal plate to hold the bone together. This repair is often used for a fracture in the intertrochanteric area of the femur.



☐ Gamma nail

A gamma nail uses screws and a metal rod inside the femur to hold the bones in place. This repair is often used for a fracture in the intertrochanteric or subtrochanteric areas of the femur.



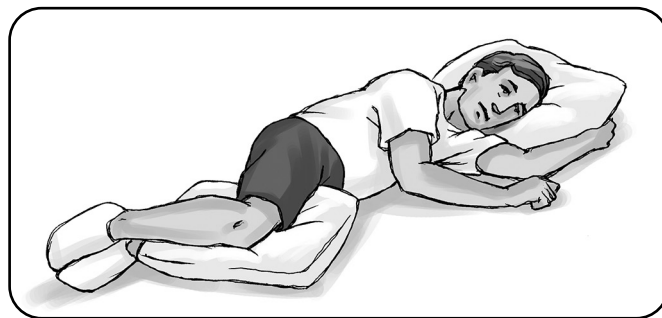
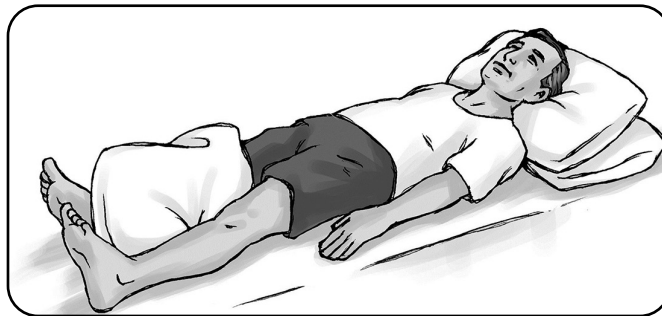
During my hospital stay

How can I get comfortable?

It is important to be comfortable as you recover from surgery. When you are resting in bed, there are certain positions that will help to make you more comfortable.

Do not lie directly on your operated side for 6 weeks after surgery.

- If you are resting for a long time, it is best to lie on your back. It can help to place a pillow between your legs.
- If you are lying on your side, you **must** lie on your non-operated side with a pillow between your knees.
- It is important to change positions at least every 2 hours to prevent pressure areas (bed sores).



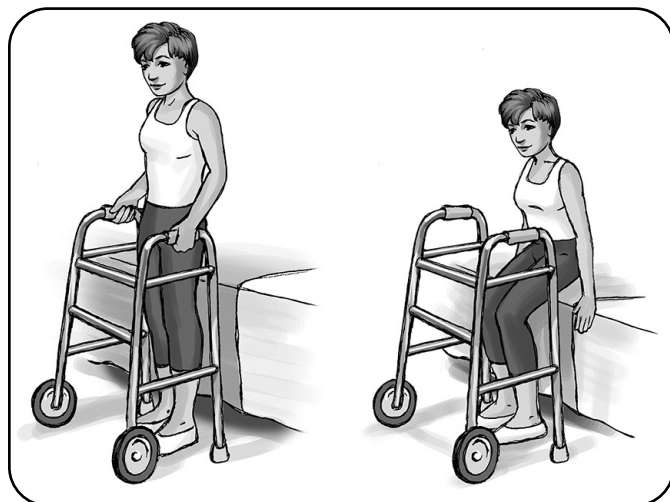
During my hospital stay

How do I get into bed?

After your surgery, a nurse or physiotherapist will help you to get in and out of bed safely.

To get into bed:

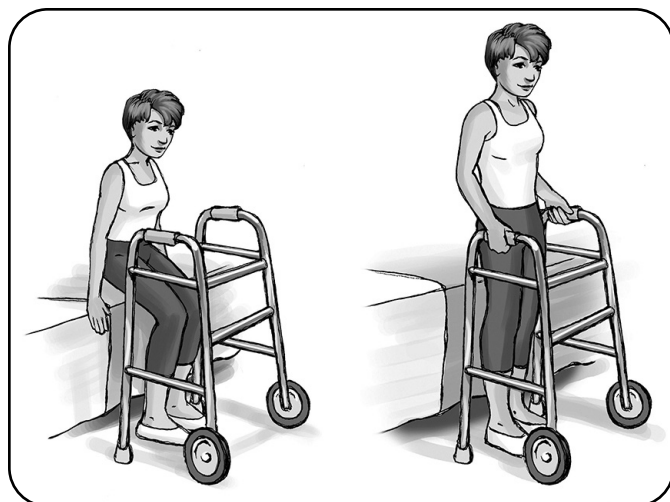
1. Stand with your back to the side of the bed.
2. Slide your operated leg forward and sit on the edge of the bed.
3. Using your arms for support, slide your bum across the bed and lift your legs up onto the bed.
4. Have someone help you lift your operated leg, if needed.



How do I get out of bed?

To get out of bed:

1. Bend your non-operated leg and use your elbows to slide your hips to the edge of the bed.
2. Sit up with your arms supporting you. Then lower your non-operated leg to the floor.



Walking after surgery

- Your health care team will explain how much weight you are allowed to put on your operated leg. **See the front cover of this guide for your weight-bearing instructions.**
- It is important that you follow your weight-bearing instructions until your follow-up appointment with your surgeon.
- **If you have a weight-bearing restriction,** you will need to use a 2-wheeled walker until your follow-up appointment.

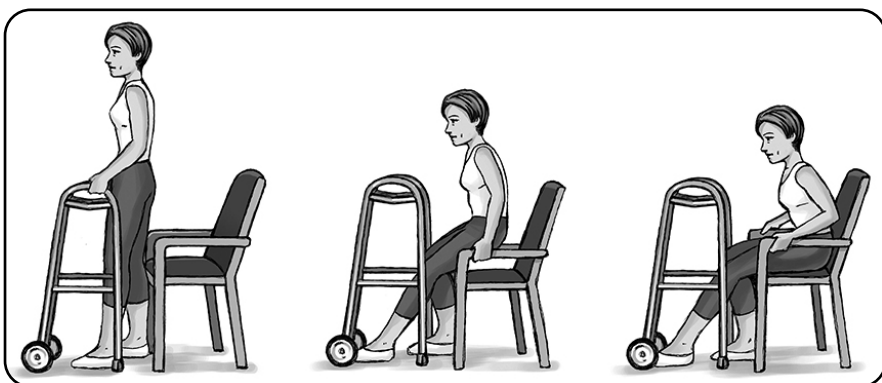
During my hospital stay

How do I sit down?

Getting out of bed often will help with your breathing, circulation, and strength. Getting up will also help to prevent pressure areas (bed sores). At first, you may need the help of 1 to 2 people to get into and out of a chair.

To sit down:

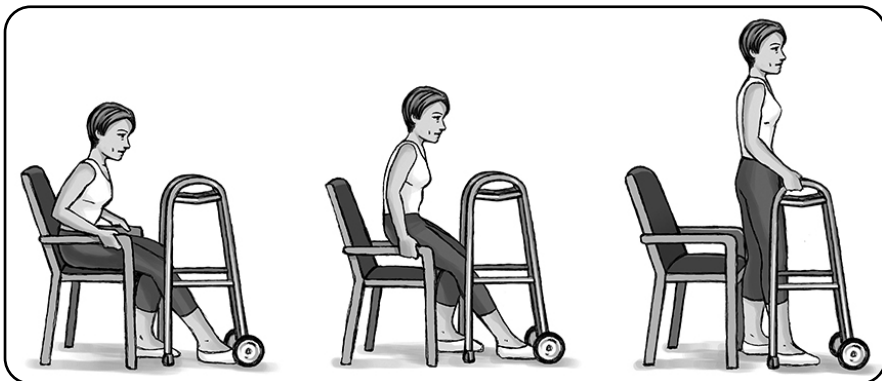
1. Back up until you feel the edge of the chair touching the back of your legs.
2. Slide your operated leg forward.
3. Reach for the armrests of the chair behind you, and slowly and gently lower yourself to a sitting position.
4. Slide your bum to the back of the chair.



How do I stand up?

To stand up:

1. Move to the edge of the chair.
2. Bend your non-operated leg under you to hold your body weight. Slide your operated leg forward.
3. Push down with your hands on the armrests, and raise your body to stand up.
4. **Do not** pull up on your walker to help you stand.



After my surgery

What are the possible complications?

Call your surgeon, or primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) if you have any of the following:

- More redness, swelling, tenderness and/or heat in the calf or thigh of either leg, or in the groin area.
- Trouble breathing or shortness of breath.
- Green, yellow, or smelly drainage (fluid) from the incision (cut) site.
- Fever (temperature of 38 °C or 100.4 °F or higher). Signs of a fever include chills, sweating, and/or headache.
- Redness around the incision that spreads.
- Red areas or open pressure sores on the skin of bony areas (like heels, tail bone).

Note: If you need dental work within 3 months after your surgery, call your surgeon. Your surgeon may want you to take antibiotics before having dental work.

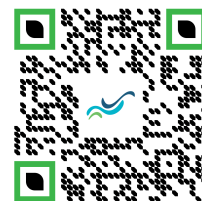
Osteoporosis

- While you are in the hospital, you may meet with a Fracture Liaison Nurse. They will talk to you about osteoporosis.
- Osteoporosis is a disease that develops over years without any symptoms. Everyone loses bone mineral density over time, which makes your bones weaker and more likely to fracture or break. The first warning sign of osteoporosis is often a broken bone.
- If you are over 50 years old and your hip fracture happened because of a fall from standing height, you may have osteoporosis. You are at a higher risk of having another broken bone unless your osteoporosis is treated. Ask your primary health care provider about a Bone Mineral Density (BMD) test to assess (check) your fracture risk.
- It is very important that you talk with your primary health care provider about your risk for osteoporosis and falling. There are treatments available that can greatly lower your risk of breaking another bone. Together, you and your primary health care provider will decide which treatment is best for you.

After my surgery

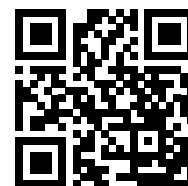
To help keep up your bone health, and for your osteoporosis treatment to work properly, you need to:

- Take your medication as instructed.
- Regularly do weight-bearing exercise.
- Make sure that you eat foods with protein.
- Eat 2 to 3 servings of dairy products a day.
 - › Only take a calcium supplement after talking with your primary health care provider. For more information, ask a member of your health care team for pamphlet 0571, *Calcium*, scan the QR code, or visit:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/0571
 - › Make sure you get 800 to 2000 IU of vitamin D a day from supplements. Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium.



If you have any questions about osteoporosis, please contact:

- Osteoporosis Canada:
 - › <https://osteoporosis.ca>
- Fracture Liaison Service at Valley Regional Hospital:
 - › 902-679-2657, ext. 2963



At home

Discharge planning

- It is important to talk with your family and caregivers about the supports you will need when you go home from the hospital after surgery. Plan to have help with heavier tasks (like preparing meals, housecleaning, laundry, yardwork).
- While you are in the hospital, it is important to prepare for going home. Your therapy team will work with you to make sure you are able to manage daily tasks before you go home (like getting dressed, going to the bathroom, bathing, and moving around).
- Consider installing handrails on both sides of your stairs. Make sure the handrails are as long as your stairs.

At home

How do I climb stairs?

Even if you do not have stairs at home, learning how to go up and down stairs safely is important. Your physiotherapist will help you practice climbing stairs before you leave the hospital.

To walk up stairs with a handrail and a cane:

1. Hold the handrail with one hand and the cane in your other hand. Stand close to the first stair.
2. Step up onto the first stair with your non-operated leg.
3. Straighten your non-operated leg, and bring the cane and your operated leg up together so that both feet are on the same stair.
4. Repeat steps 1 to 3 for each stair.



To walk down stairs with a handrail and a cane:

1. Hold the handrail with one hand and the cane in your other hand. Stand close to the first stair, facing down the stairs.
2. Move your cane down onto the first stair. Step down onto the first stair with your operated leg.
3. Then step down onto the same stair with your non-operated leg.
4. Repeat steps 1 to 3 for each stair.

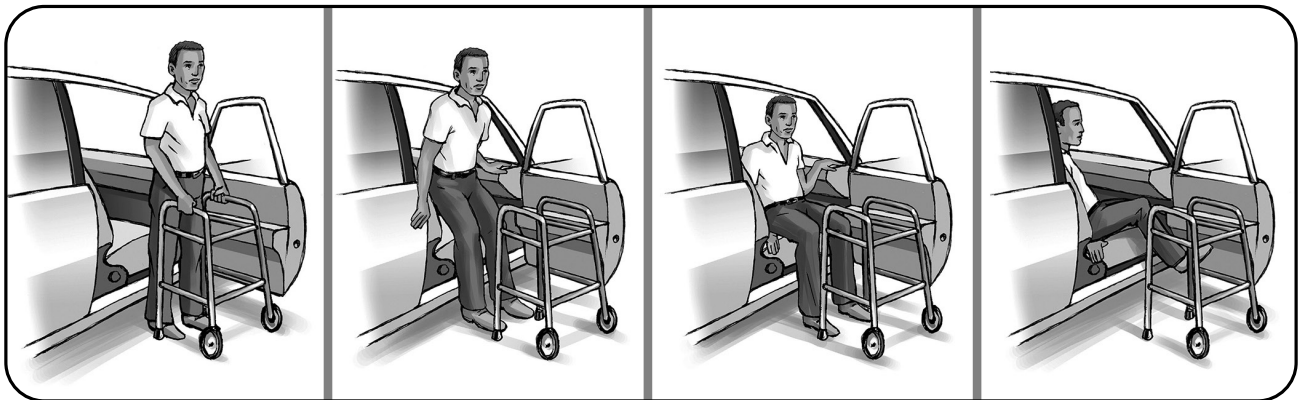


Remember: Your “good” leg goes **up** first and your “bad” leg goes **down** first.

At home

To get in and out of a car:

1. Have your caregiver fully open the passenger door, move the seat back, and recline (lean back) the backrest. If it helps, place a cushion on the seat to make it higher. A plastic bag can help you slide onto the seat more easily.
2. Stand so that the backs of your legs are against the base of the car. Place one hand on the dashboard and slide your operated leg forward.
3. Carefully lower yourself onto the seat.
4. Bring your legs into the car by moving one leg a few inches with your hands, then the other. Continue to do this slowly, until you are in the car.
5. Reverse the process to get out facing forward.



When can I switch from a walker to a cane?

- If you have a weight-bearing restriction, you must use a walker until your surgeon tells you that you no longer need to. This is usually at your 6-week follow-up appointment.
- If your surgeon has said you can “weight-bear, as tolerated,” you can switch to a cane when you only need light pressure on your walker and you can walk without a limp.
- Using a cane too soon may cause poor walking habits and pain in other areas. Hold the cane in the hand of your non-operated side.

At home

Outpatient physiotherapy

- People are not usually sent to outpatient physiotherapy until after their 6-week follow-up appointment with their surgeon.
- Not everyone needs outpatient physiotherapy.
- Keep doing the exercises in this guide and walking as you were taught in the hospital, until your follow-up appointment. Doing your exercises will help you recover.

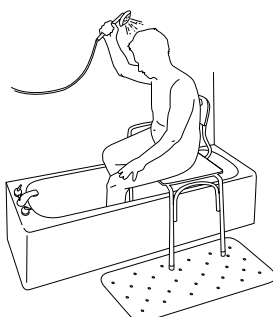
What equipment will I need at home?

An occupational therapist will meet with you in the hospital to talk about safety equipment you can use at home.

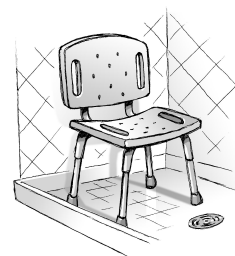
Bathing

- Sponge bathing is the safest way to wash after surgery.
- If you have a bathtub, use a tub transfer bench. This lets you get in and out of the tub without stepping over the edge.
- If you have a walk-in shower, use a shower chair.

Tub transfer bench



Shower chair



Going to the bathroom

You will rely on your upper body more after surgery. To make toilet transfers easier, you may need:

- › a raised toilet seat with arm rests
- › just toilet arm rests
- **Do not** use towel racks or toilet paper holders to help you stand up because they could break or move.
- You may need a commode if your toilet is not close to your bedroom or living room.

Raised toilet seat

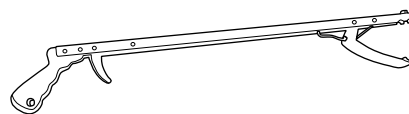


At home

Getting dressed

- There are long-handled tools to help you get dressed and reach for things after surgery.
- An occupational therapist will meet with you in the hospital to practice getting dressed. It may help to have your family bring a loose, comfortable outfit to the hospital.
- A “Hip Kit” is available in the home health care department of your local drugstore. It has:
 - › A long-handled reacher
 - › A long-handled shoe horn
 - › A sock aid
 - › A long-handled sponge
 - › Elastic shoelaces

Long-handled reacher



Long-handled shoe horn



How do I get my home ready?

- Raising the height of your bed may make getting in and out easier. Try adding an extra box spring or furniture risers.
- A bed rail may help to give you something to hold onto for support.
- Set up a recovery area in your home. Include a firm chair that is at least knee height and has armrests.
- If your chairs are low, use a firm cushion to raise the seat height.

At home

How do I stay safe at home? (preventing falls)

Simple changes to your home can lower your risk of falls. If you have questions, talk with your occupational therapist.

- Use assistive devices and safety equipment as directed by your occupational therapist and physiotherapist.
- Get up slowly after lying or sitting down. Take your time to make sure you are not dizzy before standing up.
- Keep pathways to all rooms free of clutter. This is very important if you use a walking aid.
- Make sure all areas of your home have good lighting.
- Remove rugs and mats that are not fixed to the floor.
- Keep all wires and telephone cords secured safely out of pathways. A cordless phone is a good idea.
- Limit how much alcohol you drink.
- Consider wearing an emergency response button.
- Hip protectors are special pants or underwear with padding. They are worn during the day to protect your hip and help absorb (take in) the impact of a fall. They can be bought at most drugstores or medical supply stores.

Home support and nursing services

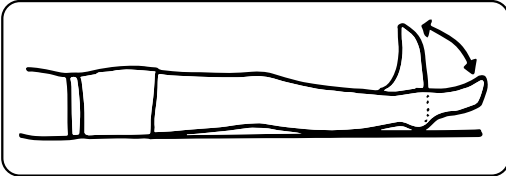
- There are options for publicly and privately funded home supports.
- A hospital-based care coordinator may visit you in the hospital to assess your needs and determine what services you may be eligible for. They will develop a care plan and arrange services if needed for discharge.
- Continuing Care is a home care program funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness. Continuing Care services include nursing services, personal care assistance, light housekeeping, laundry, meal preparation, family relief/respite, and home oxygen. Continuing Care does not provide 24-hour or overnight care.
 - › There is no charge for nursing services (like dressing changes). Depending on your income, there may be a fee for home support services (like personal care, housekeeping, or meal preparation).

My exercises

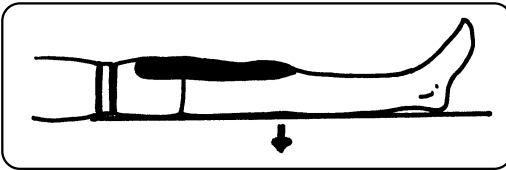
Do the following exercises 3 times a day. Start with 10 repetitions and increase up to 30 repetitions as you are able. Exercising your leg will help to relieve stiffness, increase strength, and improve circulation.

Do not be afraid to move your leg. Although it may be sore to move at first, **movement will not hurt your hip.**

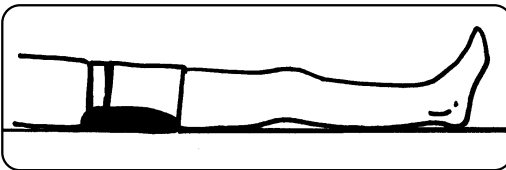
While lying down:



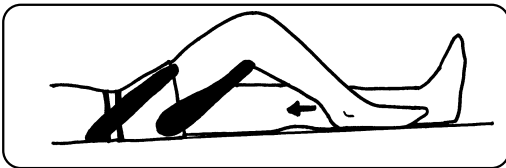
Pump your ankles up and down at least 10 times every hour you are awake.



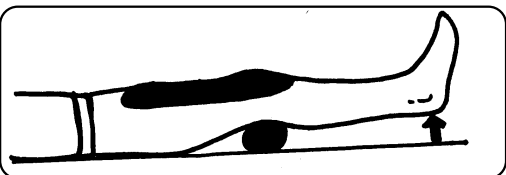
Straighten your leg by tightening the muscles on the front of your thigh. As you straighten your knee, your heel will lift off the bed. Hold for 5 seconds, then relax.



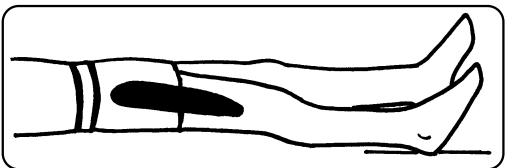
Squeeze your buttocks (bum) together and hold for 5 seconds, then relax.



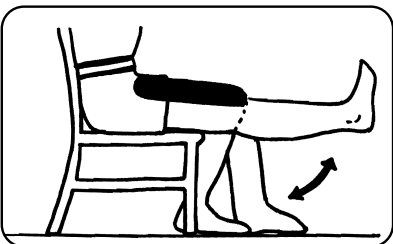
Bend your knee by sliding your heel toward your buttocks.



Place a large can (wrapped in a towel) under your knee. Keep the back of your knee on the can and tighten the muscles on the front of your thigh while you lift your heel off the bed.



Slide your leg out to the side while keeping your knee straight and your toes pointed to the ceiling. Bring your leg back to the middle.



While seated:

With your thigh well supported on a chair, straighten your knee as far as possible. Hold for 5 seconds, then relax.

My exercise schedule

Remember to do your exercises 3 times a day. Put an “X” in each box as you do the exercises.

Week 1 start date: _____						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Week 2 start date: _____						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

My exercise schedule

Week 3 start date: _____						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Week 4 start date: _____						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Week 5 start date: _____						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

My exercise schedule

Week 6 start date: _____						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Week 7 start date: _____						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Week 8 start date: _____						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

My exercise schedule

Week 9 start date: _____						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Week 10 start date: _____						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Week 11 start date: _____						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

My exercise schedule

Week 12 start date: _____						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Week 13 start date: _____						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Congratulations! You have completed 3 months of exercises after your surgery!
 Keep doing your exercises at least once a day to keep your muscles strong.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.