



Recovering at home

How will I feel at home?

Moving around your home will be difficult for some time. Your support person should stay with you 24 hours a day for at least the first 5-7 days at home. You'll need your support person occasionally for about 1 more week.

It's normal to experience pain. Some pain may continue for 2-3 months. It will get better with time. Try shorter activities at first. Slowly increase your activities. Remember to take breaks. You may feel more pain for a while if you increase your activities too quickly.

What will my incision look like?

It's Normal to have swelling, bruising, or a change in skin color anywhere on your leg. Your incision may feel numb. You may hear clicking or noises from your joint.

Continue to take your pain medication, do your exercises, and ice and elevate your leg.

Wash hands or use alcohol sanitizer on your hands before and after touching your dressing, or the area around your incision.

If you experience severe pain or swelling, contact your orthopedic physician.

Orthopedic Physician Alaska at (907)357-2267, make sure to listen to the prompts to get you to the correct team.

How can I reduce pain and swelling?

- Lay flat and elevate your leg 2-3 feet above your heart for 30 minutes, or until some swelling decreases. Do this often throughout the day.
- Apply an ice pack to your joint for 20 minutes every hour when awake.

- Take your pain medication as prescribed. Its harder to control pain when you miss doses of medication. Follow the schedule provided by your surgeon, and use less as pain improves.
- Do not leave your leg down for long periods of time.

Your care at home:

- Rest when you feel tired.
- Eat a healthy diet with fruits, vegetables, lean protein foods, and whole grains. Limit fats, sweets, and alcohol. Drink plenty of water. Do not drink Alcohol while on narcotic pain medication.
- Prevent constipation by eating high-fiber foods. Or take a fiber supplement daily, or stool softener and drink plenty of water. If constipation does occur, you may take OTC Miralax, Or Magnesium Citrate
- You may shower the day after your surgery, as long as you feel secure in your shower or have help. Do not use a pool or hot tub.
- If you had knee surgery, help your knee straighten by keeping a rolled towel under your ankle when lying down, making sure the towel is placed under the ankle to keep your heel from touching the bed. This will help reduce the risk of skin problems. Do not put anything under your knee because this will prevent straightening.
- Help prevent blood clots. Bend both ankles to move feet up and down. Do big movements. When awake, repeat 10 times each hour until you're up and moving around regularly.
- Help prevent skin problems. When sitting in a chair or lying in bed, be sure to reposition your body frequently until you are up and moving around regularly

Moving around at home:

- If you have had hip surgery, use your walker or crutches for two weeks or until you have discussed it with your doctor.
- If you have had knee surgery, use your walker or crutches for up to two weeks or until your physical therapist tells you to stop.
- Limit walking to around your house and going to appointments for 2-3 weeks. Begin walking outside when your physical therapist or doctor feels you're ready.

Living with your new joint

Returning to activities/ Common questions:

Everyone recovers at their own pace. You might need months to feel better. Getting back to normal will take time and effort. Doing your exercises as ordered will help you get better sooner.

Answers to common questions:

When can I drive?

Check with your doctor. Usually people may drive about 4- weeks after surgery.

What about sex?

Waiting 4-6 weeks after surgery gives your new joint time to heal. It's normal to have less sexual desire while your body is healing. If you had a hip surgery, follow your hip precautions during sexual activities.

When can I travel?

It's best not to travel long distances for 6-8 weeks after surgery. For 3 months after surgery, there's a risk of developing blood clots in your legs. If you travel, stop often and walk to prevent blood clots. Stopping every hour to walk or stretch can help. If flying is necessary we ask our patients who are not on blood thinners already to start Aspirin 325mg, 1 tablet the day before the flight, 1 tablet the day of the flight, and 1 tablet the day after the flight. This is to be done on the return flight as well.

Will I set off the security alarm at the airport?

Yes, that's common. Allow some extra time at the airport. We do not provide a letter stating you have an artificial joint because airport security no longer accepts these letters.

Why do I need to move around soon after surgery?

Research shows getting weight on your joint soon after surgery helps you heal. After surgery you will stand and move with therapy.

How long will the new joint last?

This depends on your age, weight, and activity. On average, a new joint may last 15-20 years. You can help your new joint last longer by maintaining a healthy weight and doing activities with less impact. Walk instead of run. Try swimming or bicycling

Do I need antibiotics for dental work in the future?

We do recommend prophylactic antibiotic use following any Total Joint surgery. Prior to any “invasive procedure” that has a risk of bacterial seeding of blood. This includes extensive dental procedures, dental cleanings and routine checkup. This will be a process for the remainder of your life.

RX: Keflex or Amoxicillin (500mg dispense #4 tablets), 2 grams orally 1 hour prior to procedure, or Clindamycin, 600 mg 1 hour prior to procedure.

Do I need antibiotics for colonoscopy in the future?

Yes, procedures such as colonoscopy or cystoscopy are included. This will be a process for the remainder of life. The same medication as used for dental work is used for colonoscopy and cystoscopies.

Things you can do to prevent infection

You play an important role in your recovery process

Here are a few things you can do to help the healing process and prevent infection.

- **TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR.** Before your surgery, discuss other health problems, such as diabetes, with your doctor. These issues can affect your surgery and your treatment.
- **MEALS.** Try to eat a well-balanced diet rich in protein (lean meats and eggs) and antioxidants (fruits and vegetables).
- **SMOKING.** Quit smoking. People who smoke get more infections than those who don't.
- **SKIN.** Follow your doctor's instructions for cleaning your skin before your surgery. Hibiclens will be provided to you at your Pre-operative appointment.
- **UNDERSTAND.** Make sure you understand how to care for your wound before you leave the medical facility.
- **HAND WASHING.** Always wash your hands with soap and water before and after caring for your surgical incision.
- **INCISION CARE.** Keep your incision clean and dry, and covered with a clean bandage. Use freshly washed clothes, bedding, and towels. Talk to your doctor on how to best care for your incision.
- **WATCH FOR SIGNS OF INFECTION.** Call your doctor if you have a fever, redness and pain around incision, drainage, or a bad odor coming from your wound.

Remember, while you may start feeling better in a few days, it takes weeks for your body to heal.

Exercises before and after surgery

What exercises should I do before surgery?

Being active helps you prepare for surgery. It will also make it easier to move around after surgery.

- Practice the exercises on pages 20-22 to help your legs become stronger.
- Do things like swimming, bicycling, and water or chair exercises. Slowly increase your time up to 20 minutes
- Strengthen your arms and legs

What exercises will I do after surgery?

Your first goals after surgery will be to gain more motion in your new joint and reduce swelling.

- Do the exercises on pages 20-22. Your physical therapist will add more exercises when you're ready.
- Move your new joint often to increase motion

If you had knee surgery, help your knee straighten by keeping a rolled towel under ankle when lying down. Do not put anything under knee because this will prevent straightening.

Hip surgery: Special note

Your physical therapist will show you how to sit, stand, and move. You'll learn to move in ways that keep your new hip joint in place and prevent it from coming out of place. These movements are called hip precautions. Your occupational therapist will teach you how to get dressed.

Heel slides:

Lying down or sitting in chair

You can do this exercise while lying down or sitting in a chair. In a chair, use your other leg to help bend the surgical leg.

- Lie on your back with both legs straight, or sit in a chair with legs bent and feet on the floor.
- Slide your heel toward your buttock, bending the knee as far as you can
- Slide your heel back to starting position.

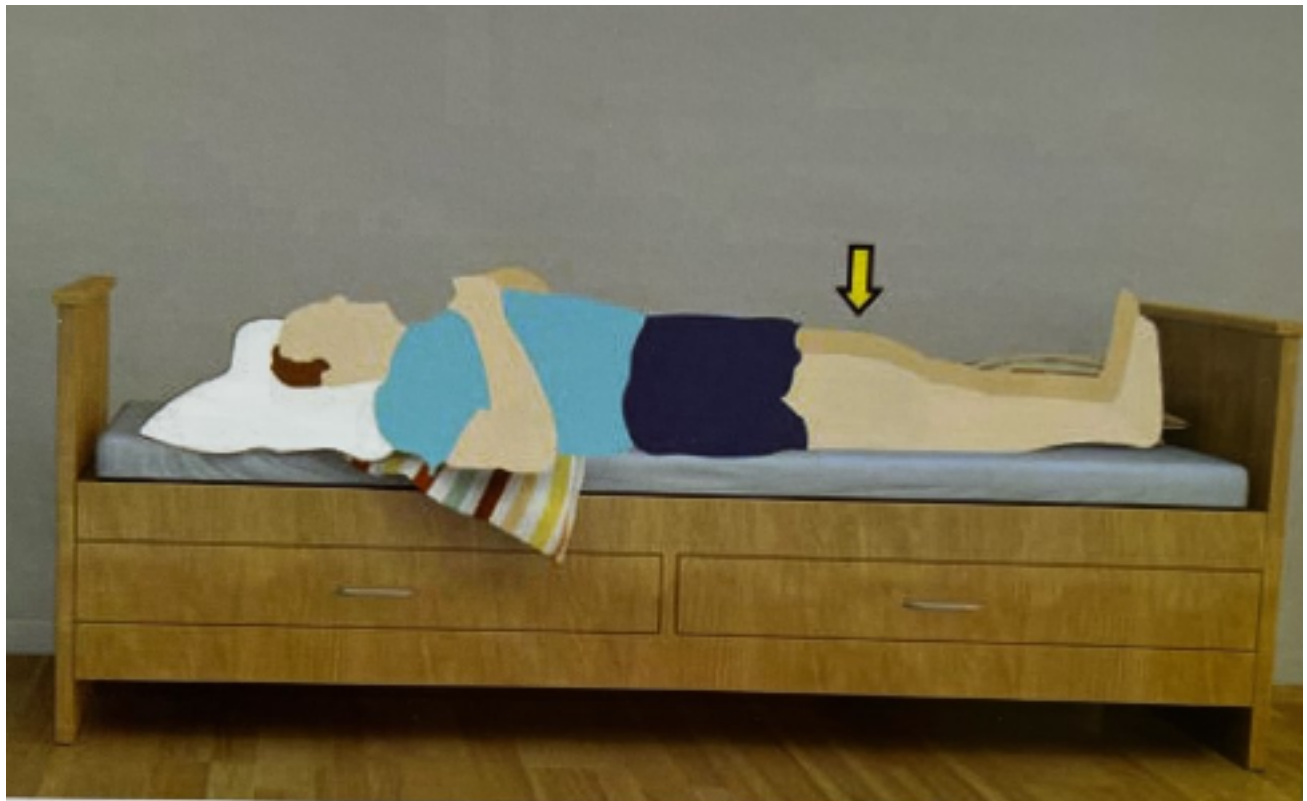
Repeat up to 10 times, at least 3 times each day.



Quad (thigh) squeezes:

- Lie on your back with both legs straight
- Push the back of your knee down toward the surface. This will tighten the muscle on the top of your thigh.
- Keep the muscle tight for up to 10 seconds, as you are able. Relax.

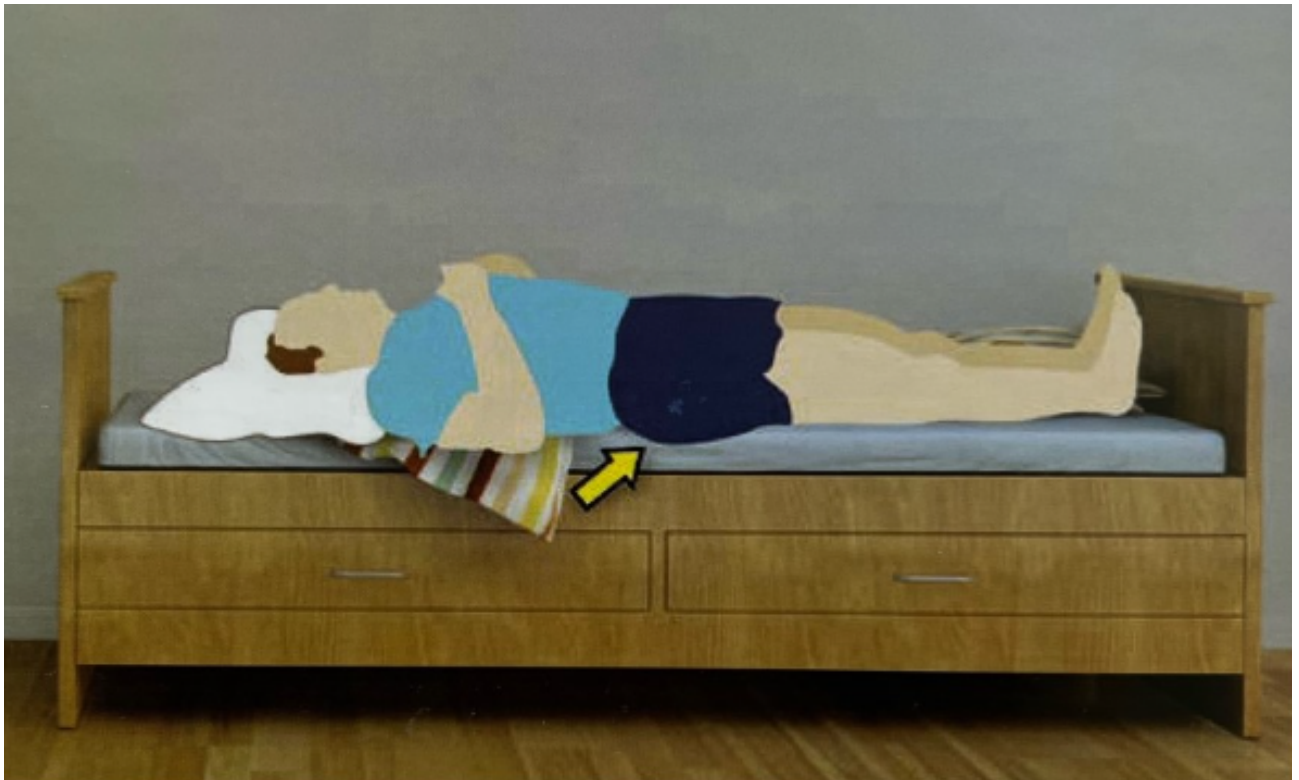
Repeat up to 10 times, at least 3 times each day.



Gluteal (buttock) squeezes

- Lie on your back with both legs straight.
- Squeeze your buttock muscles.
- Keep the muscles tight up to 10 seconds, as you are able.

Repeat up to 10 times, 3 times each day.



Member Resource Numbers

Orthopedic Physician Alaska 907-357-2267

Surgery facilities:

Surgery Center of Wasilla 907-631-3578

Matsu Regional Medical center 907-861-6000

Durable medical equipment facilities:

Alaska Medical Solutions (Game ready, CPM, SCD machine) 907-563-4401

Procure Medical (Walkers, wheel chairs, etc...) 907-357-7883

Valley Charities INC (walkers, wheel chair, etc...) 907-521-1908

In-Home Health care services:

Ancora Home Health anchorage 907-561-0700

Ancora Home Health Wasilla 907-561-9240

Wellspring Home Health 907-357-3654/3655

Wound Vac/ Prevena wound vac:

KCI – Stacia 907-227-8006

