

---

# Dr. Vivek Mittal

M.B.B.S., M.S. (Ortho), ASIF fellow  
Ranawat Fellowship (USA)

---

Email : ask@drvivekmittal.com  
Phone : +91 875 014 0140

---

## Instructions after Total Hip Replacement

### Ambulation / Walking / Weight Bearing

Usually allowed on next or 2<sup>nd</sup> postop day with both cemented and uncemented total hip implants. However, there may be exception to this, especially in revision total hip replacement or few difficult primary total hip replacement cases like acetabular fractures. For ambulation initially a walker is used to start with, followed by progression on to a cane / stick. You are allowed to put as much weight as you can on your operated leg (with the help of the walking aid in most cases). If using a cane, use it on the other side as your hip replacement. This not only helps you in unloading your operated hip, but also prevents you from falling over while your muscles around the hip recover.

In case of Uncemented Total Hip Replacement Implant it is advisable to use cane for 3 months after the surgery. This helps in better bonding between the implant & the bone, essential for the longevity of the implant.

### Dressing and Incision care

Bathing is usually not allowed until the stitches come out in 2 weeks. If the dressing appears soaked from underneath then please inform us immediately. The dressing applied in the hospital on the day of discharge can be left on until removed by us at 2 weeks (day of suture removal).

### Pain Medicine

Pain medication often is needed for 3 to 6 weeks after total hip replacement. If however one feels severe pain or spasm, use ice packs besides calling your doctor or taking SOS additional pain medicine. Please remember that if you are taking pain medicine, you MUST avoid alcohol and banned drugs.

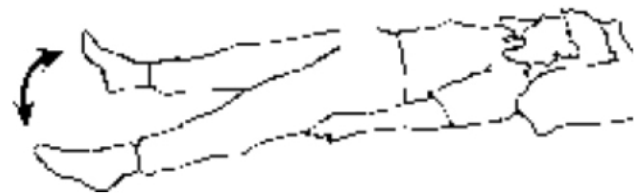
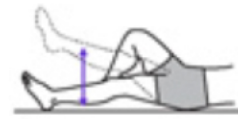
### Diet

You need to eat to gain back your strength. You should resume your pre-hospitalization diet unless otherwise instructed.

### Exercise and Activity at home

Recovery after total hip replacement is less painful and earlier than total knee replacement. Hip exercises will help you regain your mobility faster & better. The exercises should not cause severe pain. If they do, either inform your physical therapist, surgeon or stop those exercises from your schedule for a while. Exercises should be done 3 – 4 times a day.

- **Ankle & Foot Pumps:** Lying on your back while keeping legs flat on bed, move both your ankles and toes up and down hold for 5 counts. *Also known as Ankle stretching exercises.*
- **Static Quadriceps exercise:** Lying on your back flat on the bed or in sitting position pressing the knee down with pillow under the ankle. *“It is important to ensure that knee joint should not stay in persistent flexion after total knee replacement”. Also do not place a pillow under your knee at night or during rest as it prevents the knee from becoming straight.*
- **Dynamic Quadriceps exercise:** While sitting on bed or in a chair with knee hanging on the side, straighten the knee up from flexed position (Do them initially with out weights & later with weights)
- **Straight leg raises:** Lying on your back flat on the bed, raise your operated leg 12-18 inches; hold for 5 -10 counts and then lower leg slowly back to the bed. If you find it difficult or feel stress in your back then you can bend your non-operated leg and then perform this exercise (Do them without weights initially, but later can add weight gradually around ankle)
- **Hip Abductor (static) exercise:** Lying on your back flat on the bed, raise your operated leg and then take it out of the bed (abduction movement) hold for 5 -10 counts and then slowly bring leg back to the bed towards midline. If you find it difficult or feel stress in your hip then ask somebody to hold the operated leg under the ankle and then perform this exercise (Do them without weights initially, but later can add weight gradually around ankle)
- **Hip Abductor (dynamic) exercise:** Lying on your side and then raise your operated leg (abduction movement) hold for 5 -10 counts and then slowly bring leg back. If you find it difficult or feel stress in your hip then ask somebody to hold the operated leg under the ankle and then perform this exercise (Do them without weights initially, but later can add weight gradually around ankle)
- **Hip Extensor Muscle Exercise:** Lying on your back tightens the thigh muscles by pressing knees down into the bed, hold & count. You can modify it by simultaneously squeezing your buttocks together as well.



## Climbing Stairs

The following instructions are useful for climbing and descending stairs.

In case of unilateral (one hip) total hip replacement:

### UPSTAIRS

The non-operated leg goes first.

The operated leg goes second.

The crutches go last (at the same time as the operated leg)

### DOWNSTAIRS

The crutches go first

The operated leg goes second

The non-operated leg goes last

*“If you have bilateral hip done then stronger leg goes first”.*

## When can I drive?

You should not drive as long as you are taking narcotic pain medications. It largely depends on your progress of recovery, however 3 to 6 weeks is a good time to drive for most if not for all.

## When can I return to work?

Return to work is earlier after total hip replacement as compare to total knee replacement. It's never a mistake to take more time off in the beginning of the recovery as you can focus on your hip better. Depending on your occupation it takes 3 to 6 weeks after surgery to start office or light activities. Keep in mind that you need to be using crutches / cane.

## My hip clicks after surgery

Usually clicking after surgery is not abnormal. The clicking is a result of soft tissue moving across the front of the hip or the metal parts coming into contact with one another. This sensation usually diminishes, as your muscles get stronger. *"If it persist, increases or gives you a sense of instability, then please contact your surgeon".*

## How To Prevent or Reduce Leg & Ankle Swelling

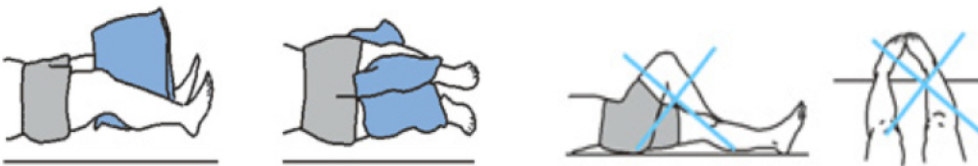
Fluid can accumulate in the legs due to the effects of gravity. Usually it is not a problem in the hospital, but it gets worse when you go home or rehab because you are doing more.

- At night place pillows underneath the legs so that they are above the heart.
- Avoid sitting for more than 30 to 45 minutes at a time
- Elevate the operated leg & foot intermittently
- Perform ankle and foot pump exercises
- Use an ice pack if you notice swelling around hip
- Use elastic compression socks
- Adequate care of medical conditions like hypertension, renal failure, cardiac failure, low proteins, low hemoglobin

## Do's and Don'ts after Your Total Hip Replacement

Below is a general list of precautions to follow after your total hip replacement.

### Lying Down



- When you lie on your back
  - Keep the abductor pillow between your knees
  - Avoid bringing your knees to your chest (avoid flexing your hip beyond 90°)
- Avoid crossing your legs.

### Sitting

Usually chair sitting is started in the hospital. Use a high chair for initial 6 to 12 weeks preferably with a side handle.

#### Do:

- Keep your knees lower than or equal to your hips.

#### Don't (Avoid):

- Sit in low, soft chairs such as sofas.
- Bend to pick up any objects from the

- Use a high toilet or a raised toilet seat on a standard toilet.
- Sit on a firm chair (preferably) using two firm pillows
- floor.
- Bend to clean or dry your feet.
- Do not cross your leg while sitting in a chair or standing

### Other positions to avoid following Total Hip Replacement



### You must call your doctor!

If you experience any of the following problems

- Discharge from the incision
- Increasing redness of the suture line.
- Temperature over 101<sup>0</sup> degrees
- Sudden shortness of breath or chest pain or difficulty in breathing.
- Increasing tenderness of thigh or calf or increasing pain.
- Swelling of the knee, calf, or ankle that does not respond to elevation for few hours (*the leg and ankle must be elevated above the level of the heart*).