

Anterior Hip Replacement – Post-op Instructions -Bremner

Guidelines After Anterior Total Hip Replacement Surgery

Congratulations on your new Direct Anterior Hip Replacement (DAHR)! I am excited to guide you through your recovery as you begin to regain your active lifestyle. This document will attempt to help you through your recuperation with activity guidelines, as well as answer some of the most common questions that patients have after undergoing this procedure.

By the time you have left the hospital/rehab facility, you should be able to get in-out of bed with minimal help, walk with the cane several hundred feet, and go up and down stairs.

I request you use a walker or crutches for 2 weeks even if you feel it isn't needed. The implants we use need to incorporate to the bone, which takes at least 6 weeks. Many patients move to a cane (in the opposite hand) at 2 weeks and use this for a variable amount of time; if you feel that you still need it for safety/balance, please continue to use it. If you are limping, you need to use something to help with support.

If I feel at the 2 week or 6 week visit that you need help, I will prescribe physical therapy. Generally, we don't need that and I think it can actually cause more pain and inflammation in some cases.

Walking:

I recommend that you walk often (at least 2-3 times a day), trying to walk a little further each time. You may walk inside or outside as you feel comfortable. As stated above, you will need a walker or cane for stability for the first 2-6 weeks. When you begin to feel that you don't need the cane anymore, you can begin to wean from the cane. For the first 2 weeks just do short walks(out to the mailbox, 1-2 blocks, around the house). From 2-6 weeks can increase to 1 mile. After 6 weeks no limit on distance.

Motion:

Your hip is stable, but avoid extending the hip behind you, and don't externally rotate the foot excessively outward for the first 2 weeks.

You do not need to worry about sitting in low chairs, toilet seats, or driving. You can also sleep in any position you want, and do not need the pillow between your legs.

Pain control:

Once you get home and further out from surgery, you may try to wean from the pain medication, as there are many side effects of taking narcotics. I suggest that you try

decreasing the amount of pain medication or increasing the interval between doses in order to wean from the medication during the day. You may have to try different methods to see what works best for you. You can also take an anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen (Advil) or naproxen (Aleve), if your stomach can handle this.

Most patients have some numbness in the thigh or near the incision and this usually fades slowly away over weeks and months. This is from stretching and irritation of the skin nerves during surgery.

Exercises:

The early exercises for the DAHR consist of the following, and should be done by performing 5 sets of 10 through the course of the day:

1. Ankle pumps
2. Quad sets (pressing the knee down)
3. Gluteal squeezes
4. Side raises (abduction) in a standing position and while lying on your side
5. Straight leg raises (do not do this with any weights) lying on back

My best advice to you during your recovery is to listen to your body – that is, if you feel pain during an exercise or afterwards, you have probably overdone it

You will see me or one of my physician assistants at 2 weeks, 6 weeks, and 1 year. We will obtain x-rays of your new hip and go over the plan to continue making progress.

Frequently Asked Questions:

When can I shower?

You can shower as soon as you get home. With either stitches or staples, do not immerse the incision in water, and just pat it dry.

How long should I use the pain medication?

This is different for each patient; some are able to use only Tylenol or Advil after you leave the hospital, and others require pain medication as needed for 2-3 weeks. A general rule is that you should try to decrease your use of these medications as time passes.

When should I go to outpatient therapy?

Most patients recover rapidly without outpatient therapy. However, if you feel that it is essential that you begin outpatient PT right away, you can call my office and we will provide a prescription and a list of places.

When can I drive?

You should not drive as long as you are taking narcotic pain medication. You can resume driving when you feel your reaction times are back to normal (about 2 weeks). If it is your right hip, you may need to wait another week or two.

I feel “clicking” inside the hip, is this normal?

The clicking is a result of the soft tissues moving across around the hip, or the artificial parts coming into contact with one another. This sensation usually diminishes as your muscles get stronger.

I am experiencing a lot of swelling, is this normal?

Fluid can accumulate in the legs due to the effect of gravity. It is not unusual that you didn't have it in the hospital, but it got worse when you went home (because you are doing more!) To combat this, you should elevate your legs at night by lying on your back and placing pillows under the legs so that they are above your heart. If this alone doesn't help, you can purchase knee high, medium (15-20 mm Hg) compression surgical stockings at most drug stores.

Can I work out in the gym?

You can go to the gym and resume upper body workouts, as long as the hip is in a non-loaded position (you should be sitting, not standing, when using weights). You can ride a stationary bike or walk a treadmill at 2 weeks. No lower extremity weights for 3 months. No yoga or impact sports for 6 months.

When can I return to work?

It depends on your occupation. It is never a mistake to take more time off in the beginning of your recovery, as it will give you time to focus on your hip. I recommend taking at least 3 weeks off for a single DAHR, and 6 weeks for a double DAHR. Manual labor requires 3-4 months off sometimes.

When can I go to the dentist?

Please wait until 3 months after surgery, as the hip is still healing and there is increased blood flow to this area.

Can I travel?

In general, I like to see you before you fly. If you are traveling by car, you should be sure to take frequent breaks so that you don't feel too stiff when getting up. I would try not to fly in first 4-6 weeks after surgery.