

Orthopaedic Connection

Total Knee Recovery In A Word: Exercise

By Thomas J. Haverbush, M.D.
Orthopaedic Surgeon

Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

You would have to be living in a cave not to know that there are a ton of Total Knee Replacements being done nowadays. It seems like everyone knows someone who has had a Total Knee Replacement (or has had one themselves!).

In writing about Total Knee Replacement before, I pointed out that there are about 7 Total Knees being done for every 1 Total Hip Replacement.

Most people also know that the patient satisfaction after Total Knee Replacement is much lower than for Total Hips. There are several reasons for this. But that is not what I had wanted to cover today.

Exercise is the Key to Recovery After Knee Replacement

I realize most people reading this will not have had a Total Knee replacement. The subject is important for your general knowledge and for you to help others who have had total knee surgery.

After total knee surgery one of the important reasons the patient is not progressing is lack of strength. Knee replacement is no picnic for most patients.

Hard Work Ahead

Hopefully with the new "Joint Camp" type programs our patients are clued in ahead of time that much will be expected of them. If strength does not return to the operated leg, "Houston, we have a problem". I deal with all kinds of patients of different ages, sizes, motivation. Some are depressed, some are eager and willing to do everything that is necessary. Some are self starters, some require great encouragement - you get the picture.

In Real Estate its Location, Location, Location.

In Total Knee Replacement its Exercise, Exercise, Exercise.

It is critical to recovery and return to function.

Strengthening the quadriceps muscle above the knee can't be over emphasized. It is important to restore balance among all the muscles above and below the knee, but the quads are primary.

What Happens After Surgery?

- After surgery the knee is swollen and painful.
- As a result the quadriceps shuts down.
- Imbalance is present between quads (front) and hamstrings (back).
- The knee becomes shaky and gives way.
- Quad atrophy sets in.
- Knee won't straighten completely.

Quad Exercise

I start asking my patients to do them first thing the next morning. You have to restore muscle strength early after surgery. I had not planned on giving specifics about how I and the physical therapist advise and work with each patient. We will make this very clear to each patient. I wanted to make everyone aware of the huge, primary importance of strengthening exercises.

Office Website and Gratiot County Herald Archive

This is for the two or three people who have not read every article I have written for Gratiot County Herald and for some of you who may have forgotten a few things!! All is not lost! Log onto www.orthopodsurgeon.com and follow directions to the GCH Archive of Articles. They are all there from last to first. It covers all the problems I deal with in the office and hospital.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives. I specialize in you.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush