

Maximizing Your Benefits

How exactly does exercise improve your health and physical abilities?
The four key elements are:

- Endurance;
- Strength;
- Balance; and
- Flexibility.

To learn more about which exercises to do and how to modify activities, visit the Canadian Orthopaedic Foundation website at <http://www.movepainfree.org>. Look for “Get Moving: Maximizing Your Activity After a Hip or Knee Replacement”.

Endurance

How it helps

- Endurance or aerobic activities make you breathe harder and make your heart beat faster.
- They help to improve your heart, lungs and circulation systems and boost energy.

Examples

- Fast walking, yard work, and dancing.
- If you're heavier or other joints are painful, choose other great workouts. Biking, swimming and aqua-fit all place less of a load on your hips, knees and ankles.

How much to do

- At least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days, or 2½ hours a week.
- You don't have to do it all at once. You can benefit from as little as 10 minutes at a time.

Strength

How it helps

- Strength activities help prevent you from losing muscle as you age.
- Strong muscles make everyday activities easier, like getting out of a chair or doing stairs.
- People who've had a hip replacement or who have osteoarthritis (hip or knee) often get weakness in the front thigh and side hip muscles. Strengthening these muscles can help you to reduce pain, walk normally, and improve balance and function.

Examples

- Weights, resistance bands, and activities such as heavy gardening.

How much to do

- A new joint can improve mobility, but it won't make your muscles strong. Do strengthening exercises two or more days a week. Don't work the same muscles two days in a row.
- Certain muscles let you stand longer and walk a distance: front thigh, side hip, and calf. For those, build up to 30 repetitions without stopping.
- For other muscle groups, build up to 10-15 repetitions of each activity.

Balance

How it helps

- Balance exercises help to prevent falls.
- Many leg strengthening exercises also will improve your balance.

Examples

- Standing on one foot, walking on your heels or toes, toe raises, and Tai-Chi.

How much to do

- 2-3 times a week, or as often as you like.
- Start by using a counter, wall or chair for support. To challenge yourself, try to hold less for support, eventually not holding on at all.

- If you're steady on your feet, try doing the exercise with your eyes closed or on an unstable surface (e.g. a cushion or Bosu ball).

Flexibility

How it helps

- Stretches help your body stay flexible.
- They help you to more easily do the tasks of everyday life, from reaching up to a shelf or down to tie your shoes.
- Stretching can also decrease muscle aches after endurance activities.

Examples

- Range-of-motion exercises help to maintain or restore normal joint movement and relieve stiffness.
- Beyond exercises and stretching, you could include an activity such as yoga (which also improves balance and strength).

How much to do

- Stretching is best when your muscles are warmed, after your endurance activity or a shower.
- Hold each stretch for 30-45 seconds. Do each stretch three times.

Keys Things to Remember

- As you recover, you can begin many of your normal recreational pursuits, including exercise.
- Improve each of these elements – your endurance, strength, balance, and flexibility – for the most benefits.
- Working on all four areas can help you to keep moving and prevent falls.
- Slowly increase your activities. Ask your doctor about any restrictions, and about starting a sport.