

The Orthopedic Center

HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST



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It is necessary to prepare your home for your return following your total joint replacement. The checklist below covers the most common areas of concern for you. Be sure to review this list and make any modifications to your home before leaving for your procedure.

When moving through this checklist, please ask another able-bodied person to assist you in physically rearranging your home. You could consider asking a family member, friend, neighbor, or member of your church or community group.

It may take you one to two hours to work through this checklist and prepare your home. If you cannot go through this checklist prior to surgery, you may need a caregiver to do a safety evaluation on your home after surgery.

Your therapists and nurses may have more specific instructions for home modifications as they work with you in the hospital for special situations to help make the transition back home easier. If you have further questions, please contact 936-639-7654.

PATHWAYS

You will need a clear pathway between the bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, and living room.

- Remove clutter and tripping hazards like cords, furniture with sharp edges or wide-based supports where you will be walking.
- Tape down loose carpet edges that stick up.
- Remove throw rugs until you recover and are more stable.
- If you have pets that like to walk next to you, they will need to stay out of your way until you recover and are more stable on your feet.
- Arrange for someone to feed and water your pets and plants until you are able to bend over safely. This may be approximately 6-8 weeks.
- Place your chair, remote controls, radio, telephone, medicine, tissues, wastebasket, and drink in the place where you will spend the most time while you recover.

LIGHTING

You will need a well lit environment to see where you are going.

- Put a lamp and a flashlight beside your bed or where you will be sleeping.
- Turn on lights before you enter a dark room or keep night lights on in rooms. It is unadvised to walk in dark rooms as you might fall.
- Remember to turn on a light if you need to get out of bed at night. Allow yourself time to get oriented to your surroundings before moving.

STAIRS/STEPS

This refers to either inside or outside the house.

- Install solid handrails ideally on both sides of the stairs or steps that can support your weight.

BATHROOM

This can be an unsafe area in your home due to water on the floor/surfaces. Plus the average size bathroom can be small which presents challenges when using walkers, crutches or canes.

- Assess the ability to maneuver in your bathroom with a walker. A standard rolling walker is usually 24-27 inches wide and 12-17 inches deep. Will you be able to move between the bathtub/shower, toilet, and sink? Will you be well-balanced in the area? Can you move into/out of the door easily? If you cannot do these things it will be difficult to do so after surgery and you may need a portable toilet that can be used in another room in the house.
- What will your showering situation be after surgery? Will you be using your usual bathroom or would another be more convenient or accessible? Is there a secure place to sit in the shower or is there room for a shower chair or waterproof stool? Please speak with the social worker during your hospital stay if you need to acquire this type of equipment prior to your discharge from the hospital. It is a good idea to have a hand held shower adapter installed.
- If your tub or shower does not have a slip resistant product on the bottom, consider having one installed prior to your surgery.
- Install grab bars by the toilet and in the shower/tub that can support your weight.

KITCHEN

- Move frequently used items from high or low storage areas to waist/chest level.
- Set up a clean, clutter free table as your kitchen work space that is close to the sink/stove/refrigerator.
- Stock up on basic foods. Prepare freezable meals ahead of time that can be reheated and served easily.

BEDROOM

- Move clothing and toiletries to chest/waist level to avoid reaching or bending.
- If possible, try to make the bedroom you will be using after surgery on the same level as the bathroom and kitchen.
- Have a lamp and a flashlight at the bedside.
- You may need the portable toilet or urinal beside your bed at night.
- Someone else will need to empty the portable toilet/urinal as you will be using an assistive device for walking.

FURNITURE

- Put a chair with armrests in each room that you intend to use after surgery.
- All sitting surfaces that you will be using should be no lower than 24 inches. Couches and sitting chairs may need to be built up with blocks or furniture extenders.
- If you are having hip surgery, you will not be able to safely use a recliner for approximately 2-3 months.
- No furniture should be on wheels. Store it away for now until you are more stable on your feet.