Moving safely after a fracture or joint operation

Your instructions depend on the injury and the operation. Ask the therapist to show you how your movement or weight limits apply when getting out of a chair or using the bathroom.

Orthopedic trauma, surgery for a degenerative condition and complications during healing can all disrupt movement and daily activities. The team considers the injury, restrictions, wound, other medical needs and the support available at home.

What Are Orthopedic Injuries?

Orthopedic conditions include any impairments that affect the musculoskeletal system, which is made up of bones, joints, and soft tissues like muscles, tendons, and ligaments. These issues can be present from birth, can result from congenital diseases or aging, or can be caused by an orthopedic injury. While some orthopedic injuries can heal on their own with time and rest, orthopedic trauma is often severe, complex, and life-altering. Orthopedic trauma refers to a sudden, acute orthopedic injury, such as a fracture, dislocation, or torn ligament. These types of injuries most commonly result from serious accidents, and they require immediate treatment to prevent further damage. This often includes a consultation with an orthopedic trauma surgeon, and in many cases, surgery. The majority of orthopedic surgeries are performed on wrists, elbows, shoulders, spine, hips, knees, and ankles. Depending on the situation, they might be performed as open surgery, or with a less invasive arthroscopic method.

Causes And Symptoms Of Orthopedic Injuries

There are a number of degenerative disorders that cause dysfunction within the musculoskeletal system — arthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome and fibromyalgia being some of the most prevalent. Orthopedic conditions like these are constantly recurring, or chronic, and are one of the leading causes of doctor visits. In severe cases, a person with a chronic orthopedic impairment may require surgery. Joint replacement and fusion procedures, often performed to relieve arthritis, are some of the most common types of orthopedic surgeries, and carpal tunnel release is one of the most common of all surgical procedures in the United States.

Orthopedic injuries and chronic conditions that affect the musculoskeletal system vary in severity, but pervasive and sometimes debilitating pain is almost always a factor.

Other symptoms include:

- Stiff joints
- Swelling or dull aches
- Tingling or numb hands
- Pain from repetitive motions
- Weak, stiff and bruised muscles

As we age, our risk for musculoskeletal disorders increases. Elderly people have an elevated risk of orthopedic injuries from falls or accidents, which can result in broken wrists, ankles, ribs, arms, legs, feet, and pelvic or collar bones. Elderly patients who may be taking medications should speak with their doctors

to see if their balance will be affected, and those at risk for osteoporosis should work with their physicians to identify the right diet and exercise plan to help prevent symptoms. However, younger individuals are not immune to orthopedic injuries. The majority of referrals to orthopedic trauma surgeons are a result of sports related injuries, indicating that participation in athletics, especially contact sports, is a significant risk factor for serious orthopedic injuries.

Complications From Orthopedic Injuries & Surgery

Because orthopedic surgeries are one of the most prevalent types of medical procedures, orthopedic trauma surgeons and surgeons that specialize in a particular aspect of orthopedics, like hand surgery or joint replacements, are well trained to efficiently correct any problems that may arise. However, as with all surgery, there is a small risk of excessive bleeding, infection, or an allergic reaction to anesthesia. Other possible complications from orthopedic surgery include nerve damage, lack of full range of motion, development of arthritis, scar tissue formation, and re-injury of the joint or soft tissue.

Pain and swelling are to be expected after any surgical procedure, so orthopedic surgeons work closely with clinical teams to manage pain and monitor healing. Depending on whether a patient's surgery is done traditionally or arthroscopically, the length of the hospital stay will vary. Some patients, especially those who experience complications or have complex injuries, may need more time to heal, in which case they would be moved to a transitional care facility that specializes in long-term care and orthopedic rehabilitation.

What Is The Best Path To Recovering From Major Complications Following Orthopedic Injuries And Surgery?

There are a number of factors that contribute to the length of the recovery process after orthopedic injuries and surgery. Recovery plans that incorporate comprehensive orthopedic rehabilitation, experienced therapists, and advanced treatment technology are more likely to be successful and prevent reoccurrence of injury.

After orthopedic surgery, medical treatment and physical recovery may need to proceed together. Ask the surgeon for current restrictions and tell the therapist which movements or transfers are difficult at home.

Your care program could include:

- An experienced team of doctors, nurses, and physical and occupational therapists
- A dedicated physical rehabilitation unit
- The latest in treatment technology
- Programs to help you smoothly transition back home or to your next level of care
- A multi-purpose lounge for you to enjoy throughout the day
- Education and training for you and your loved ones

We encourage your loved ones to be part of your orthopedic rehabilitation program, including coming in to offer encouragement and observe therapy sessions. With your permission, family members are also welcomed to talk with staff, ask questions and get updates on your progress.

Infection, changes in breathing, blood clots or wound problems can interrupt orthopedic recovery. Confirm whom to contact for new symptoms and how the team will adapt therapy if a complication develops.

Archived recovery account

This account describes care in an earlier setting. The course, timing and outcome belong to that individual.

The patient is a semi-truck driver and one day while at work she fell and a truck rolled over her left leg, causing severe damage and fractures to her pelvis and femur. She was rushed to a general hospital where she underwent numerous surgeries to repair her fractures and also received extensive skin grafting and wound care.

Just a month after the accident and hospitalization, the patient came to the treating hospital to continue her recovery and receive advanced wound care and rehabilitation. At the beginning, the greatest challenge her team of caregivers faced was managing her severe pain and to continue aiding the recovery of her wounds and fractures. The patient completed a course of antibiotic therapy to resolve her infections and slowly but steadily healed both on the inside and out with diligent care from her team. Motivated, determined and hard-working, the patient made excellent progress and in just under two months after arriving at the treating hospital, the patient's wounds were closed, she had regained the ability to take care of her daily needs and was beginning to walk with the aid of a walker.

She recalled needing extensive assistance on arrival and being able to walk when she left for home.

References:

MedlinePlus explains rehabilitation after injury or surgery, including how the team assesses function and decides what support is needed to return to daily activities. https://medlineplus.gov/rehabilitation.html

Further reading on this topic — https://medlineplus.gov/rehabilitation.html

MedlinePlus organizes information about bone, joint and muscle disorders, including problems that can affect movement and recovery after orthopedic injury or surgery. https://medlineplus.gov/bonesjointsandmuscles.html

Talk with Lakeview

For questions about a possible stay, call Lakeview Admissions at (262) 534-8509. During a stay, ask the bedside nurse who can help with your question.

https://www.lakeviewsystem.com/inpatient-rehabilitation