



OrthoAdvice

Debunking Common Myths of Joint Replacement Surgery

By Jonathan Kase, MD

Many people suffer from chronic joint pain yet won't consider joint replacement surgery because of some common misconceptions. These mistaken beliefs prevent them from having an improved quality of life. It's time to set the record straight on the myths and realities of joint replacement surgery.

Myth #1: I won't be able to go up and down stairs after surgery.

We expect you to be able to go up and down stairs after total joint replacement surgery. In fact, one of the criteria for being discharged from the hospital is that physical therapists make sure you can navigate stairs.

Myth #2: I'll have a lengthy hospital stay because of excruciating pain.

While some pain is to be expected after joint replacement surgery, there are many ways to treat it after the operation. When following a customized care plan, the typical hospital stay is two to three nights after surgery.

Myth #3: I should wait until I can't walk before considering joint replacement surgery.

Joint replacement surgery is most effective for patients who are still active, but have limitations in activity due to pain or deformity from arthritic joints. To that point, the patient who can still walk, but is having increased difficulty going distances, managing uneven terrain, or standing for extended lengths of time, is an ideal candidate.

Myth #4: I'm too young (or too old) for joint replacement.

The younger a patient is having a joint replacement, the more likely it will need to be redone due to

wear. However, if one's activities are markedly compromised, then a joint replacement should be considered. Alternately, older age isn't necessarily a limiting factor. It is more about the patient's activity level and any coexisting medical conditions that dictate whether an older patient is a candidate or not.

Myth #5: I'll have permanent restrictions after joint replacement surgery and will never be able to exercise or play a sport again.

With joint replacement surgery, certain activities are known to increase the wear and revision rate. I encourage patients to refrain from running and jumping; however, activities like golfing, walking, bike riding, and swimming, are all within reason for a joint replacement patient.

Myth #6: Recovery from joint replacement takes a long time.

The most challenging part of recovery is during the first three months. Most people return to independence at that point. There are still subtle improvements made in the months after that all the way up to one year following surgery.

Myth #7: I won't be able to kneel on my knee replacement.

The knee incision is right in front of the knee where one kneels. Also, kneeling puts pressure on the metal and plastic parts in the knee replacement. This will not harm the knee replacement, so I allow patients to do it, if they please, noting that it will likely feel awkward and different to kneel on the replacement parts.



Dr. Kase, a board-certified, fellowship-trained orthopedic surgeon, specializes in the treatment of a wide range of orthopedic conditions, including sports injuries, fractures and arthritis. He is a graduate of the Medical College of Ohio. Dr. Kase practices at the Crystal Clinic Orthopaedic Center location in Wadsworth.



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