



Keeping
British Columbians
Moving for Life

PHYSIOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION OF BC

Hip and Knee Injuries and Joint Replacements

Hip and knee injuries are common conditions treated by physiotherapists.

Sore knees can be caused by a sudden injury, like a twisting motion that can tear the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), or can also occur through routine overuse. When hip and knee joints are injured, the result is often pain and significant difficulty walking. Hip and knee replacements are also increasingly common.

How Physiotherapists Help Hip and Knee Problems

Whether you are recovering from hip or knee surgery, or you have pain in your hips and knees from overuse or a sudden injury, your physiotherapist can provide you with a customized program to minimize long-term damage and help you heal faster.

Who are Physiotherapists?

Physiotherapists are university trained medical professionals qualified to assess and treat the conditions that are affecting the body's movement system and function, and prescribe therapeutic exercise to sustain improved mobility. They are experts in treating hip and knee conditions, and rehabilitating patients after joint replacement surgery.

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Practical Tips For Joint Health

- **Correct muscular imbalances.** Most overuse injuries of the knee develop gradually due to muscular imbalances and poor movement patterns. Your physiotherapist will give you corrective exercises to address the muscle imbalances and improve the way you move.
- **Strengthen hips.** Strengthening your hips and improving core muscle strength will prevent future hip injuries, and will also reduce the risk of adversely loading knee joints. Stretching the muscles that attach your hips, knees and ankles will also minimize compression of your joints. Your physiotherapist will provide you with therapeutic exercises to achieve all of these goals.
- **Protect joints.** If you have degenerative changes in your knees (e.g. osteoarthritis), your physiotherapist can show you how to protect your joints during activities of daily living, will prescribe exercises to improve the strength of supporting muscles, can advise on safe forms of exercise, and will also assess your footwear.
- **Correct movement patterns.** Poor movement patterns during sports (e.g. incorrect landings during jumping) greatly increase the risk of traumatic hip and knee injuries. Your physiotherapist will teach you how to move properly to minimize this risk.



Practical Tips Following Joint Replacement

- **Increase strength.** During rehabilitation, you should gradually work up to 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity per week, even in just short, ten-minute bouts. Most physiotherapists and surgeons recommend walking, cycling, swimming, water exercises, golf and weight training to start. Your physiotherapist will also provide you with an exercise program that helps you to regain strength, flexibility and balance needed to safely resume your recreational activities.
- **Don't stress out new joints.** Activities that are stressful on new joints or put you at risk for future injury are NOT recommended. These include high impact and contact sports like baseball, basketball, jogging, racquet sports, soccer and hockey.
- **Following joint surgery, use walking aids.** You should not progress off walking aids too soon, as limping puts abnormal forces through the new joint, and other joints in the legs and back. Work with your physiotherapist to find the right pace at which to increase your walking and reduce your need for walking aids.

For more information

To find a physiotherapist best for you, visit the PABC's website at www.bcphysio.org or download the **Find a Physio** app.

