

Best Practice Statement

Hip and Knee Joint Replacement (Arthroplasty)- Post Operative Care and Rehabilitation

Overview

This best practice statement provides guidance on NHS Lothian provision of post operative rehabilitation for people who have undergone hip or knee replacement surgery (arthroplasty). It is intended to provide support for healthcare professionals in primary, secondary and tertiary settings, non- NHS organisations commissioned to provide services for NHS Lothian, people having knee or hip replacement their families and carers. It also provides guidance for people who have undergone hip or knee replacement surgery privately and who seek NHS post operative care and / or rehabilitation. The approach aligns with The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guideline 157 [Joint replacement \(primary\): hip, knee and shoulder](#).

Inpatient rehabilitation

A physiotherapist and/ or occupational therapist should offer rehabilitation, on the day of surgery if possible and no more than 24 hours after surgery to people who have had a primary knee or hip replacement. This rehabilitation should include:

- Mobilisation **and**
- Advice on managing activities of daily living **and**
- Home exercise programme **and**
- Advice on self- directed rehabilitation. This should ensure that the person whom has had the knee or hip replacement has a clear understanding of their rehabilitation goals and the importance of doing the exercises prescribed to achieve these goals **and**
- A point of contact for advice and support. This is typically the arthroplasty advice line for the relevant unit in which the surgery was undertaken- see section “Point of contact”.
- Routine outpatient rehabilitation is not usually required following hip or knee replacement surgery. A referral for outpatient rehabilitation can be arranged by the inpatient team for people who meet criteria outlined in the section below “outpatient rehabilitation”.

Outpatient rehabilitation

Routine outpatient rehabilitation is not usually required following hip or knee replacement surgery.

A referral for outpatient rehabilitation (either individual or supervised group) may be arranged by the inpatient team at the point of discharge based for people who;

- Find that self-directed rehabilitation is not meeting their rehabilitation goals **or**
- Have ongoing functional impairment leading to specific rehabilitation needs **or**
- Have difficulties managing activities of daily living **or**
- Have a cognitive impairment

Important: Patients who were not provided with outpatient rehabilitation at the point of discharge and subsequently meet the criteria outlined above should be directed to contact the surgical unit responsible for their operation to review their rehabilitation requirements- see section “Point of contact”. Direct outpatient physiotherapy referrals from primary care clinicians are not recommended.

Date issued 29.09.2026	Version no. 1.1	Author: L. Ramsay, P. Ackerman	Authorised by: MSK Physiotherapy Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Group	Date of Last Review 29.09.2026	Next Review date October 2028
---------------------------	--------------------	--------------------------------------	--	-----------------------------------	----------------------------------

Point of contact

If the person who has undergone hip or knee replacement requires advice or support with respect to rehabilitation they should use the contact details provided below:

Surgical unit	Contact details
The Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh	<2/ 52 post op- 0131 242 3481 (ward physiotherapy- Mon – Fri 8am -4pm) >2/52 Arthroplasty advice line- 0131 536 3724 For healthcare professional only- Loth.arthroplastypractitioners@nhs.scot
Fife National Treatment Centre	01592 643355 Ext 22685 >2/52 Arthroplasty advice line- 0131 536 3724 For healthcare professional only- Loth.arthroplastypractitioners@nhs.scot
Golden Jubilee National Hospital	0141 951 5521
Spire Healthcare- NHS Lothian patients	< 2/52 0131 316 2532 (ward physiotherapy) >2/52 Arthroplasty advice line- 0131 536 3724 For healthcare professional only- Loth.arthroplastypractitioners@nhs.scot
Spire Healthcare- Private patients	0131 316 2532

Patient information

A range of patient information regarding hip and knee replacement surgery is provided on the website [Edinburgh Orthopaedics](#)

Specifically:

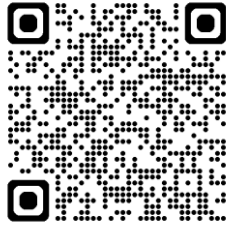
- Total Knee replacement patient guide [04502-edinburgh-jp-knee-guide.pdf](#)
- Total Knee replacement patient video(Pre-op) [edinburghorthopaedics.org/media/jkxfjvwg/ot - total_knee_replacement-720p.mp4](#)
- Hip replacement patient guide [04501-edinburgh-jp-hip-guide.pdf](#)
- Hip replacement patient video (Pre-op) [edinburghorthopaedics.org/media/xqti4jp0/ot - total_hip_replacement-720p.mp4](#)
- Physiotherapy advice and exercise guide following hip / knee replacement – Video [edinburghorthopaedics.org/media/5fppvbz1/physiotherapy_advice - exercise_guide_hip_or_knee_replacement-360p.mp4](#)
- Recovery after surgery advice [Edinburgh Orthopaedics](#)

Fife National Treatment Centre:

- [Partial Knee Replacement | NHS Fife](#)
- [Total Knee Replacement | NHS Fife](#)

Date issued 29.09.2026	Version no. 1.1	Author: L. Ramsay, P. Ackerman	Authorised by: MSK Physiotherapy Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Group	Date of Last Review 29.09.2026	Next Review date October 2028
---------------------------	--------------------	--------------------------------------	--	-----------------------------------	----------------------------------

Total Knee Replacement Patient resources and information:

NHS Lothian: Total Knee Replacement patient guide 	NHS Lothian Pre-op Total Knee Replacement VIDEO 
Fife National Treatment Centre Partial Knee Replacement guide 	Fife National Treatment Centre: Total Knee Replacement guide 

Total Hip Replacement Patient resources and information:

NHS Lothian Total Hip Replacement patient guide 	NHS Lothian Pre-op Total Hip Replacement VIDEO 
---	--

NHS Lothian Exercises following arthroplasty surgery:

NHS Lothian Exercise guide/ VIDEO following hip / knee replacement 	NHS Lothian Recovery after orthopaedic surgery advice 
--	---

Date issued 29.09.2026	Version no. 1.1	Author: L. Ramsay, P. Ackerman	Authorised by: MSK Physiotherapy Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Group	Date of Last Review 29.09.2026	Next Review date October 2028
---------------------------	--------------------	--------------------------------------	--	-----------------------------------	----------------------------------

Date issued 29.09.2026	Version no. 1.1	Author: L. Ramsay, P. Ackerman	Authorised by: MSK Physiotherapy Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Group	Date of Last Review 29.09.2026	Next Review date October 2028
---------------------------	--------------------	--------------------------------------	--	-----------------------------------	----------------------------------