

## The Importance of Post-Operative Rehabilitation

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Many patients with bone or spine problems end up with one surgical procedure or another. At certain stages in treating particular conditions, the surgery process is often the only way to fix a structural abnormality. In particular cases, non-surgical treatment for back pain from spondylosis (degeneration of the vertebral column) is possible. Please consult with a doctor or physical therapist as soon as possible.

The most common orthopedic problems are spine deformity and degeneration, shoulder problems, osteoarthritis due to degenerative change, and bone or tendon abnormality from a sports injury.

## Completing a Well Designed Rehabilitation Process

Some people believe that by going through the operation, at the end of the process they will be able to return to normal life with functions fully restored. This is however unfortunately not the case. A surgical procedure no matter how appropriate to the abnormality is only one part of the medical process and patients need to begin and complete a well-designed rehabilitation process in order to regain function.

What is the right time for rehabilitation to begin after surgery?

It is urgent to begin a rehabilitation program immediately after surgery. After surgery, our bodies begin working on the healing process immediately. In that process, the body begins the formation of fibrous tissue as the body heals the surgical site. Immobilization and exclusively resting is the worst way to proceed if one wants to regain maximum function. This becomes significantly more difficult to accomplish if rehabilitation doesn't begin until after one to two weeks.

Your healthcare team can give you specific advice on the best way for you to recover, depending on the kind of surgery you've had. Recovery may require months of rehabilitation, or it may be a relatively simple process that only needs the patient to change their normal routine for a few days.

However, even with a simple surgery, patients will need some follow-up action. It might be as simple as learning what to do for common complications such as bleeding or infection of the wound or to do certain exercises at home.

## What is the role of a Physical Therapist?

After your surgical process is finished, optimally, the physical therapist should get involved in the process of rehabilitation. The physical therapist can help to design a plan involving progressive exercises that will begin to strengthen the body, restoring the patient's range of motion and overall stability.

After some time, the physical therapist will know the patient better than the doctors do, an experienced physical therapist should be able to decide on the appropriate activities and exercise. In the case of an injury and operation that involves the spine, a neurologist and an occupational therapist should be involved to identify treatment to stimulate nerves.

## How Much Time is Required to Fully Recover from Surgery?

Depending on your state of health, it can be shorter or longer. The duration of rehabilitation therapy required to maximize function after surgery also depends on several additional factors, including the particulars of the disease itself, the individualized rehabilitation plan, and the stage of the individual's healing.

Generally speaking, recovery may take four to six weeks to see the improvement which then is the result of surgery plus proper rehabilitation.

## Important Factors to Maximize Recovery

There are factors that help to fully recover the functions of the muscle, bone or joint that was the site of surgery. The main determinant of optimal recovery outcomes is adherence to a well designed and customized program and the completion of that rehabilitation program while working with a professional team of therapists.

## An Interdisciplinary Team of Medical Experts

Rehabilitation needs an interdisciplinary team of medical experts and patients should be part of the discussion and decisions in the formation of a recovery plan. The process is more effective if the patient can be involved in establishing their recovery goals.

The interdisciplinary team works together in an integrated, personalized and holistic way which keeps the patient motivated as well. This is why we also consider rehabilitation to be a bit of an art.

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