

The Value of Prehabilitation

For most, thinking about and planning for surgery can be overwhelming, but proper preparation and education can help assure that recuperating after surgery is as successful and seamless as possible.

Rehabilitation after a hip/knee replacement or similar surgery is common for many elderly patients. However, prehabilitation prior to such a procedure is a relatively new care program designed to improve strength and performance of functional tasks, as well as reduce the amount of pain and recovery time after surgery.

Years ago, a study at New England Baptist Hospital, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Harvard Medical School, all in Boston, found that knee and hip replacement surgery patients who participated in strength training, along with aerobic and flexibility exercises, for just six weeks prior to their surgeries reduced their odds of needing inpatient rehabilitation by 73 percent.

“Even in a fairly brief time period, the exercise paid off for [prehab] participants,” said lead study author Daniel Rooks, PhD, assistant professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. “Their level of function and pain stabilized prior to surgery, whereas those who did not exercise got worse. The benefits of exercise before surgery are very clear: the more you can do for yourself physically before surgery, the better off you will be.”

Now, more physicians are recommending prehabilitation than ever before. “Fifty percent of

outcome success is due to the surgeon, and the other 50 percent is due to the patient’s commitment to recovery – starting with prehab,” says Vonda Wright, MD, assistant professor of orthopedic surgery at the University of Pittsburgh’s Center for Sports Medicine.

At our campus, our expert staff will partner directly with your physician or orthopedist to ensure that your specific care goals are met. Our therapists are specially trained to assist you in becoming as well conditioned as possible prior to surgery through a variety of moderate exercise, including warm-ups, slow walking, squats, knee curls, hip abductions and adductions, calf raises, cardiovascular activity, strength training, flexibility training, and functional skills. Our specialized care even extends throughout the entire recovery process if you are unable to return home directly after surgery.

For more information about our prehabilitation program, and/or the services and amenities of our proprietary Home Again rehabilitation program, please contact a member of our staff today.

