

ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING WHILE NON-WEIGHT BEARING (LOWER LIMB)

INTRODUCTION

This resource is for patients who are likely to be 'non-weight bearing' after their surgery. This means that for a period of time (your medical team will discuss this time with you according to your personal needs) after your operation you should not take weight through the operated leg/foot to allow it time to appropriately heal.

This is a 'how to' guide, to prepare you for how you can manage activities of daily living once you return home after your surgery. It is recommended that you read through this booklet and clarify any terms or strategies you are unsure of with your surgeon, occupational therapist, or physiotherapists.

The booklet is generalised and therefore may not be individually suitable to your operation and recovery. You may receive alternate recommendations on how to manage at home after your surgery from your surgeon, nursing staff or therapist.

We are committed to providing you with the best standard of care and information for an efficient and effective recovery. If you have any specific questions regarding your recovery once you return home please reach out to your medical team while you are in hospital or your local GP.

THE ROLE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Occupational Therapists can support you to engage in activities of everyday living and maximise your independence following an injury/ operation whilst you are non-weight bearing.

Your Occupational Therapist will discuss the activities you normally complete in your day, your home environment and your goals following your surgery and hospital stay.

Occupational Therapists can assist you to reach your goals by providing education and assistive equipment to increase independence in tasks including showering, dressing, cooking, cleaning, laundry, gardening and shopping.

An Occupational Therapist may prescribe equipment, arrange additional supports or a home assessment to assist with your discharge from hospital.

An Occupational Therapist will also discuss rehabilitation pathways with you if indicated.



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TYPES OF WEIGHT BEARING

As you recover, your weight bearing restrictions are likely to change. Only progress the amount of weight that you take through your foot as recommended by your medical team.

The following outlines different types of weight-bearing restrictions you may progress to:

Non-weight bearing: You must not put weight through the operated leg or foot as per your medical team. The operated leg is not permitted to support any weight at all. This includes when standing up and sitting down. You will be “hopping” on the non-operated leg using crutches or other walking aids to aid your balance and moving around.

Touch-weight bearing: When standing or walking the toes of the operated leg can touch the floor for stability but you should not put weight through it. You will need to use crutches or a walking frame.

Partial-weight bearing: You can take some weight through your operated leg but not all. The amount of weight you can put through your operated leg will be decided by your medical team. You will need crutches or a walking frame to help you to do this

Heel-weight bearing: Weight can be put through the heel of the operated leg but you should not take weight through the front of your foot or your toes. Crutches or walking sticks can help you with your balance.

HOUSEWORK & COOKING

You are likely to require support with shopping and housework when you discharge home again after your inpatient stay. You will need to always have two hands on crutches or on your walker, this needs to be considered during:

Meal preparation

- You may wish to place a stool or chair in the kitchen so that you can sit down while you prepare or eat food and wash up to conserve your energy.
- Consider having your meals pre-organised (e.g. preparing meals and freezing them ahead of time, meals being provided by family members/ supports, purchasing frozen meals or arranging a meals service to provide meals).

Transporting meals

- Consider how you will transport your meals from the kitchen to your designated meal area.
- If you have crutches or rollator frame, you may require assistance to transport your meals.
- Alternatively, you could use a backpack or apron to carry items.
- If using a rollator frame, you could use a bicycle basket/ caddy tray to carry items.



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Housework

- Consider what is most important for you to be doing while you are non-weight bearing, and how you can plan how you can safely attend to these tasks.
- Think about what activities you can delegate to family members/ supports.
- Consider arranging support (such as My Aged Care if you are >65 years).

SAFE TRANSFERS

Sit to stand

- Having a bed or chair to push up from makes transfers easier and safer.
- The higher the chair, the easier it is to get up from, ensure the chair is stable before use.
- Arm rests on chairs can be helpful as they provide a wider base of support for you to push from. Ensure you use both hands to hold the arm rests on either side of the chair or stool to avoid it from moving or tipping.
- You may need to use upper body strength or your 'good leg' to lift your injured leg into or onto the car, bed, foot stool etc.
- When sitting down into a chair, use your hands to feel for the chair, keep stepping backward until you can feel the chair behind your legs, place your hand down before sitting to guide yourself into the chair.

Toileting

- A toilet seat raiser will make it easier to transfer on/off the toilet by raising the height of the toilet and providing arm rests to push up from.
- Rails can also be installed for a more permanent option.
- It is safest to complete all aspects of toileting while seated. If you need to stand, you will need to rely on your frame, crutches or toilet seat raiser for support.

SHOWERING

It will not be safe to stand up and shower while you are non-weight bearing.

If you have a walk-in shower:

- You will require a shower chair/ stool. A shower chair or stool allows you to sit while showering, preventing fatigue and decreasing your risk of a fall. Arm rests and height adjustable legs provide extra support when transferring from sit to stand.
- You may also find it easier to use rails which can provide support when transferring in and out of the shower. *Location of rails is important, please speak to your Occupational Therapist if you are considering grab rails.*
- A hand-held shower hose is useful to direct water when sitting or standing.
- Slip resistant flooring, non-slip mats or tiles will reduce the risk of falls.
- Position shower chair so that it is easily accessible but remains stable once you have opened the shower door. Ensure to be careful of the shower lip whilst using frame or crutches.
- Consider if you require the assistance/ supervision of someone else to safely transfer in and out of the shower.



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- If you have a hand-held shower hose, position this so it is easily accessible once you are sitting in the chair.
- You may need to rely on a rail, your shower chair or a family member to support you when you need to stand.
- You will need to bag your cast/ splint to prevent it from getting wet – you may need support to do this.
- You may be more comfortable resting your leg on a foot stool outside the shower to keep it dry.



If your shower is over the bath:

- You may require use of a bath board or bath bench, if this is something you are considering please speak to your Occupational Therapist.
- If neither of these are suitable it may be safer to sponge wash at the sink with a shower chair.
- Fixed grab rails and non-slip mats in and outside the bath will provide support when transferring in/ out of the bath, reducing risk of falls.
- Long handled sponges, toe washers or soap- on a rope can also assist with unnecessary bending and reducing the risk of falls.

DRESSING

- It will be safer to complete dressing while sitting down.
- You may require assistance from a family member or use of a frame or crutches to stand and pull lower limb garments up.
- If you are wearing a ‘Zimmer’ splint you may find it easier to put it on whilst sitting up in bed.
- You may find it easier to wear loose-fitting clothing and clothing without too many buttons or zips.
- You may consider wearing non-slip socks or solid shoes when mobilising to reduce risk of falls.
- You may find using long- handled aids to be helpful whilst dressing (e.g. sock aid, pick up stick, shoehorn). Please discuss these items with your Occupational Therapist, alternatively there is a list of suppliers at the end of this resource if you would like to source independently prior to your admission.



STEPS & STAIRS

If you have steps or stairs at home, you will need to practice these with your mobility aid before returning home.

To go up a step or stairs:

- Hold onto a handrail if you have one, with a crutch in your other hand. If there is no handrail then use both crutches.
- First hop up with your 'good' leg.
- Then bring your crutch(es) up onto the same step.

To go down a step or stairs:

- Hold onto a handrail if you have one, with a crutch in your other hand. If there is no handrail then use both crutches.
- First put your crutch(es) onto the step below.
- Then lower your 'good' leg onto the same step.

Things to consider:

- If you have a two-storey house, consider setting your home up so you are able to temporarily live downstairs to reduce the risk of falls and re-injury.
- Ensure you hold onto a handrail while navigating steps provide stability and support.
- If possible, consider using an alternate entrance to your home to avoid steps.
- Door magnets can assist by holding a door open, while you are using a mobility aid.
- Ensure hands are empty when walking, this will reduce the risk of injury and falls (e.g. putting bags of shopping down, asking for assistance with transporting items).

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Work

- Consider any alternative means and options to work from home.
- Speak with your GP about timeframes to return to work.
- It may take longer to return to heavy manual work.

Transport

- It is important to consider how you will travel to destinations throughout your recovery (e.g. appointments, grocery store and shops).
- You may wish to consider arranging with a family member, friend or support person to help with transport.
- Your GP may be able to assist you with taxi vouchers to subsidise transport, or consider linking with My Aged Care if you are >65 years).



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Wheelchairs/ Other Mobility Options

- Your Occupational Therapist may provide you with a wheelchair for longer distances, if suitable. However, it is important to maintain fitness and as much independence as possible.
- Steps and stairs will impact your ability to use a wheelchair.
- Your Occupational Therapist can provide information on wheelchair prescription and where to source an appropriate wheelchair.
- Alternatively, we recommend contacting an equipment supplier listed at the end of this resource.
- If you have any questions, please contact your Occupational Therapist.

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS

ACTIVE MOBILITY (Sales only)

721 Port Road, Woodville Park

Ph: 7220 0650

www.activemr.com.au

AIDACARE (Hire and Sales)

Multiple locations: Regency Park, Plympton Park, Ascot Park, Morphett Vale

Ph: 1300216 898

www.aidacare.com.au

BETTACARE MOBILITY & SUPPORT

Flinders Park (Hire and Sales)

Ph: 1800 255 994

www.bettacaremobility.com.au

LEEF INDEPENDENT LIVING SOLUTIONS

17 Lindsay Ave, Edwardstown (Sales)

Ph: 8276 1300

3/57 Magill Road, Stepney (Hire)

Ph: 8362 6422

<https://leef.com.au/>

HIGHGATE HEALTHCARE (Hire and Sales)

2 Selgar Ave. Clovelly Park

Ph: 1300 350 350

www.highgatehealthcare.com.au

HOME CARE EQUIPMENT SERVICES

11 Myer Ct, Beverley

Ph: 8338 7988

www.HomecareEquipment.com.au

HOSP EQUIP (Hire and Sales)

62 Leader Street, Forestville

Ph: 7225 8720

<https://hospequip.com.au/>

INDEPENDENT LIVING SPECIALISTS (ILS)

(Hire and Sales)

161-165 Grote Street, Adelaide

Ph: 8410 7335

Unit 1/502 North East Rd, Windsor Gardens

Ph: 8317 5070

www.ilsau.com.au

INDEPENDENT LIVING CARE AND MOBILITY

CENTRE (Hire and Sales)

467 South Rd, Keswick

Ph: 8346 3733

www.ilcmc.com.au

MAX HEALTH CARE EQUIPMENT

(Hire and Sales)

2 Bartholomew Street, Richmond, SA 5033

Ph: 1800 684 277

<http://maxhealthcareequipment.com.au/>

REHABILITATION EQUIPMENT SERVICES

(Hire and Sales)

Unit 2, 616A Marion Road, Parkholme

Ph: 8276 2613

www.Rehabequipment.com.au/contact/

XTRA CARE EQUIPMENT

622-624 Regency Road, Broadview

Ph: 8266 7000

www.xtracareequipment.com.au

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Disclaimer: The information contained within this publication does not constitute medical advice and is for general information only. Readers should always seek independent, professional advice where appropriate.