

# Knee Replacement: When Can You Be Active Again?

You've had your knee replacement. Now your job is to make your knee strong again.

And you may be asking: How long before you're walking on your own ... or driving ... or doing your favorite activities?

Well ... it's different for everyone. But there are a few general markers you can use to track your progress. Talk to your care team to see what they think will happen. Some people are able to do things sooner than others.

In the 12 months after your surgery, your knee will get stronger and won't get tired as quickly. For the first 1 to 3 weeks, you'll need help moving around. Most people start with a walker. Later, you might use crutches or a cane.

Within 3 to 6 weeks, you'll probably be able to start everyday activities. Things like helping out with dinner or easy household chores. And a short trip with someone to do an errand may be possible ... But you'll be moving slowly.

At 4 to 8 weeks, you'll probably be able to walk on your own. This will happen when you have less pain, can bear your full weight, and can safely move around without falling. It may take up to 8 weeks before you can drive again.

And if you work? The chances are that you'll be back in 4 weeks to 4 months. \*When\* you go back depends on the type of work you do. If you have a desk job, it'll be sooner. If you have a more physical job, it'll be later.

So how well will your knee work? As it improves over the next few months, you'll probably be able to do many of the activities you used to do ... whether that's riding a bike, gardening, or spending time with family and friends.

Now your doctor may ask you not to run or do activities that put a lot of stress on your knee. But talk to your doctor about activities you'd like to do. They may be possible.

So, what can you do to help your knee get better?

First, follow your care team's instructions for your exercises. Start at an easy level, and slowly increase the intensity. Aim for slow improvement over time.

Second, slow down or take a break if you start to have pain or swelling. But then try to do a little more when you feel better.

And finally, track how well you're doing. Use a notebook or a computer to record your progress. It will take time to make your knee strong. But by following your program for getting better, you'll get the most you can from your new knee.

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