

## Pre-operative Rehabilitation for the Osteoarthritic Hip

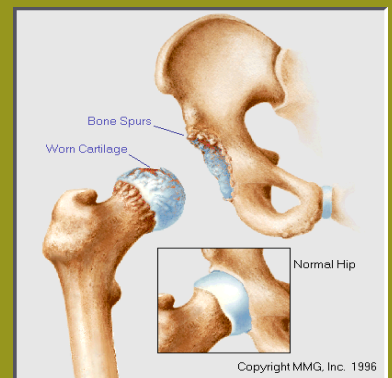
### WHAT IS OSTEOARTHRITIS?

The arthritis society of Canada suggests that one in ten Canadians are affected by osteoarthritis- a condition that affects joints in the body. This disease is capable of affecting any joint, but is primarily seen in the hands and weight bearing joints such as the knees, hips and spine.

Osteoarthritis develops when the cartilage that covers the ends of bones wears down. Cartilage is a tough elastic material which acts as a shock absorber to protect your bones from rubbing against one another when weight is put through them. Over time, this cartilage may break down and become thin, resulting in friction between the ends of two bones. This friction causes severe pain, stiffness and lack of movement.

An individual who is affected by osteoarthritis of the hip may experience severe pain, a decrease in strength, flexibility and range of motion. Due to these factors, total hip arthroplasty may be required. Also known as a joint replacement, joint arthroplasty refers to replacing a painful, damaged or arthritic joint in the body with a new joint consisting of artificial material. This material is shaped like the hip joint and allows the hip to regain movement and function.

Rehabilitation after surgery is an important part of recovery. However research suggests that commencing in a pre-operative exercise program is just as important.



### PRE-OPERATIVE REHABILITATION

The term “**prehabilitation**” refers to conditioning the body, through exercise, before it undergoes some type of physical stress such as joint arthroplasty. Studies suggest that functional ability of the hip after surgery is strongly dependant on its functional ability before the surgery. A pre-operative exercise program would incorporate exercises to target four main areas including, strength, flexibility, proprioception and cardiovascular fitness.

Medical research supports pre-operative rehabilitation for improvement in the areas of:

- proprioception / position sense and balance
- strength
- functional capacity
- decreased need for inpatient rehabilitation
- shorter duration of hospital stay
- cardiovascular fitness
- weight loss/reduced strain on the hip joint

#### References:

- Taylor NF et al. Aust J Physiother. 2007;53(1):7-16  
Hunter DJ et al. J Anat. 2009;214(2):197-207  
Rooks DS. et al, Arthritis & rheumatism 2006; 21(2)700-8

**Physiotherapy for osteoarthritis of the hip is covered by most extended health insurance plans.**

**For more information, please contact**

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