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TIPS FOR EXERCISE AFTER knee replacement

After a knee replacement, you may want to get back on your feet. Follow these tips when you're ready to exercise again:

- Ask your doctor before you try any new exercise.
- Continue to do the exercises your doctor or physical therapist prescribed.
- Consider swimming, biking and walking, as they're easy on the knees.
- Limit or avoid high-impact exercise like running, skiing or racquetball.

Source: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons

Help for restless legs

Do you feel a twitchy, jumpy feeling in your legs when you sit or lie down? Do you have an urge to move your legs when you go to bed at night? If so, you may have restless legs syndrome (RLS).



WHAT IS RLS?

RLS is known as a sleep disorder, although it can happen when you're awake or asleep. It occurs when you're resting or lying still, and is more common at night. Because it can interfere with sleep, RLS is linked to:

- Daytime sleepiness
- Memory problems or trouble concentrating
- Mood changes
- Job performance issues
- Problems with personal relationships

RLS affects people of any age, but tends to cause more problems in older adults.

WHAT CAUSES IT?

RLS can run in families, especially if your symptoms began before age 40. Experts believe RLS may be related to a problem in the part of the brain that controls movement. It may be linked to certain health problems, including:

- Low iron in your blood (iron deficiency anemia)
- End-stage renal (kidney) disease
- Neuropathy (nerve damage)

Most of the time, though, there's no clear cause of RLS.

SELF-CARE TIPS FOR RESTLESS LEGS

You may be able to manage mild RLS at home. Try these tips:

- Avoid caffeine. Drinks like coffee, tea, energy drinks and cola usually contain caffeine.
- Don't smoke. Ask your doctor if you need help quitting.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Get moderate exercise early in the day. Don't exercise right before bedtime.
- Try relaxation techniques like deep breathing, meditation or yoga before bed.
- Make sleep a priority. Go to bed and get up at the same time each day. Aim for seven to eight hours of sleep each night.



See your doctor regularly and tell your doctor about any symptoms you're having. You may also want to ask if you should get your iron levels checked. Doctors sometimes treat more severe cases of RLS with medications.

Understanding multiple sclerosis

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a common condition affecting millions of people across the world.



WHAT IS MS?

MS is an autoimmune disease. Your immune system is designed to fight off invaders like viruses and bacteria. Autoimmune means the immune system attacks healthy tissue by mistake.

With MS, the immune system attacks a protective coating on the nerves in the brain and spinal cord. When this coating, called the myelin sheath, is damaged, the nerves have trouble sending signals.



TYPES OF MS

Most people with MS have relapsing-remitting MS (RRMS). RRMS causes MS symptoms over a few days or weeks, known as a relapse. Then, MS symptoms go away for months or even years. When symptoms go away, this is called remission. The relapse and remission cycle repeats itself over time.

Other people may have symptoms that slowly get worse. They don't have periods of remission. This is known as primary progressive or secondary progressive MS.

SYMPTOMS OF MS

MS symptoms are very different from person to person. They can also change over time. Symptoms include:

- Feeling tired (fatigue)
- Weakness
- Loss of balance
- Numbness or tingling
- Stiff muscles or spasms
- Blurry vision
- Dizziness
- Loss of control of bladder or bowels
- Trouble with memory, learning or attention
- Speech problems
- Shaking
- Seizures

If you have one or more of these symptoms, it doesn't mean you have MS. However, you should see your doctor to find out the cause.

HOW IS MS TREATED?

If you have MS, see your doctor regularly. Treatment can help slow the disease and manage symptoms. There are different medications available to treat MS, and physical therapy is helpful for some people. A doctor who specializes in treating MS can recommend the best treatment for you.

While there is no cure, treatments for MS continue to improve. With a doctor's help, many people with MS can manage their symptoms and feel their best.

Telehealth: *What to know*

Telehealth or telemedicine uses video calls or other technology to help you see your doctor. This allows you to have medical appointments from home instead of going to the doctor's office.

GETTING READY

If you want to use telehealth, but don't know how, contact your doctor's office. Different doctors and hospitals use different apps and technology for their telemedicine appointments. Ask them for instructions on how to get set up.

Before your appointment, check with your insurance company about coverage for telehealth appointments. Prepare a list of questions to ask your doctor so you'll be sure to cover everything.



IF YOU NEED HELP

If you're feeling overwhelmed, ask a tech-savvy friend or family member to help. Usually, you only need:

1. A strong internet connection. Your connection needs to be fast enough for video chats.
2. A smartphone, tablet or computer that connects to your wi-fi and has a working microphone, speaker and camera. Most newer devices have all of these built in.

Telehealth can be a safe and convenient way to have your medical appointments. Don't be intimidated by technology. With a little help, you can be up and running — and it may become your favorite way to have your doctor visits!

Source: National Institutes on Aging