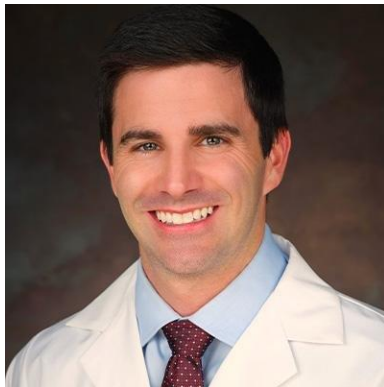


After Knee Replacement



Zac Burrow, MD, DPT

I want you to know that I understand this is a big decision, and it often comes after months or even years of pain, limitation, and frustration.

My goal is simple: to help you feel better, move better, and get back to the life you enjoy.

I care deeply about your outcome—not just in the operating room, but in your recovery and long-term success. Every decision we make is centered around what is safest, most effective, and best for *you* as an individual.

This guide is designed to walk you through the process, answer common questions, and help you feel confident and prepared every step of the way. You are not going through this alone—we are a team, and I am committed to supporting you throughout your entire journey.

Thank you for trusting me with your care!

Pictures in this guide were obtained from AAOS, HEP2Go.com, or generated with ChatGPT

General information can also be found at:

- Total Knee Replacement - OrthoInfo – AAOS
<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/treatment/total-knee-replacement>
- Total Knee Replacement - AAHKS
<https://hipkneeinfo.org/knee-care/total-knee-replacement/>
- Video - Total Knee Replacement Animation - OrthoInfo - AAOS
<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/treatment/total-knee-replacement-animation/>

Important Phone Numbers

Dr. Burrow Direct Line: 918-927-3258

- Call for refills of medications, general questions/concerns
- May also use online patient portal
 - MyMobility App is not monitored

Surgery Scheduling: 918-927-3301

- Scheduler will call you to schedule surgery once all clearances are obtained
 - Call for any surgical scheduling questions
 - Cancel, reschedule, etc.

Billing Department: 918-927-3737

- Any billing questions for AOOK

Brace Shop: 918-927-3308

Hospital Pre-Admission Testing:

- Oklahoma Surgical Hospital: 918-477-5073
- St. John Broken Arrow: 918-994-8045

Urgent Surgical Problem: 918-494-2665

Emergency: 911

Immediately After Surgery (Hospital Stay or Outpatient)

Common After Surgery

- Pain and swelling in the operated leg
- A bandage covering your knee incision
- Medications to help with: Pain control & Blood clot prevention

Physical Therapy Starts Early

- Begin **basic exercises within 24 hours**
- Help you **stand and start walking**
- Teach you how to move safely using a **walker**

Hospital Stay

- Most patients stay **1 night in the hospital**
 - Some patients may: Go home the **same day** or may need a **longer hospital stay**

At Home: First Few Weeks After Surgery

Mobility & Walking

- Use a **walker at first**, then transition to a **cane** as you improve
- Walk **short distances multiple times per day**
- Gradually work toward: Longer walks & Climbing stairs safely

Physical Therapy

- We will try to arrange **home health physical therapy**
 - This typically starts the 4th day after you return home
 - *Note: Insurance may limit this option*
- Continue:
 - **Daily home exercises**
 - Use of the **MyMobility App** for guidance

Pain & Swelling

- It is normal to have: Pain (managed with medications and ice) & bruising / swelling
- Swelling will **improve gradually over several weeks**

Help at Home

- You will likely need help with: Cooking, Bathing, Daily activities
- Plan for assistance for the **first 1–2 weeks**

Activity Goals

- Walk several times per day
- Increase activity **slowly and safely**
- Motion Goal: 0-90° at 3 weeks after surgery

Mid-Term Recovery: 6 Weeks to 3 Months

Mobility & Walking

- Walking becomes **easier and more natural**
- Decreased need for a **walker or cane**
- **Better knee motion** and strength

Return to Daily Activities

- Gradual return to normal daily routines
- May begin: Light household tasks
- Driving (*typically around 4–6 weeks, if cleared by your physician*)

What Is Normal

- **Stiffness, swelling, fatigue**, especially after activity
- These symptoms are common and should improve over time

Activity Progression

- Continue to increase activity **gradually**
- Stay consistent with exercises and therapy

Full Recovery: 3 to 12 Months

What to Expect

- Most patients return to **normal daily activities by 3 months**
- Continued improvement in: Strength, Balance, Comfort
- Full recovery may take up to **1 year**

Return to Activities

- Most patients can safely return to:
 - Walking
 - Swimming
 - Biking
 - Other **low-impact activities**

Activities to Avoid

- Running
- High-impact sports
- Activities that place excessive stress on the joint

Nutrition Before and After Surgery

Good nutrition helps your body heal, reduces complications, and improves recovery.

General Guidelines

- If you are on a **specific diet**, continue following it
- Focus on **whole, healthy foods**
- Avoid highly processed foods (fast food, boxed, canned food, etc.)

Recommended Nutrition Timeline

- Start **2 weeks before surgery**
- Continue for **at least 6 weeks after surgery**

Hydration

- Avoid **alcohol and soft drinks**
- Drink **water or tea**
- Goal: **5 servings of 12 oz per day**

Recommended Foods

- **Berries** (*1–3 servings/day*)
 - Blueberries, Blackberries
 - Frozen options are okay
- **Fruits** (*1–2 servings/day*)
 - Apples, Avocados
- **Beans** (*1-2 servings/day*)
 - Green beans
 - Pinto beans
- **Whole Grains** (*3 servings/day*)
 - Brown rice, Oatmeal
- **Vegetables** (*1–2 servings/day*)
 - Broccoli, Sweet potatoes
- **Greens** (*2 servings/day*)
 - Spinach, Kale
- **Nuts** (*1 serving/day*)
 - Walnuts, Pecans



Protein (Very Important for Healing)

- Lean meats:
 - Grilled chicken / fish
- Whey or soy protein supplements

Post-Operative Wound Care

Proper wound care is important to prevent infection and ensure good healing.

Dressing Care

- Leave your dressing **in place until your follow-up visit (approx. 3 weeks after surgery)**
 - Unless changed by home health nursing
- **No additional wound care is needed**

When to Call the Clinic

Call our office if you notice:

- Drainage **larger than the size of a quarter**
- Fluid **pooling under the dressing**
- Increasing redness around the incision
- **Cloudy or pus-like drainage**



Showering

- You **may shower with your bandage on** (it is waterproof) unless told otherwise by Dr. Burrow
 - If it looks like the bandage is coming off at the edge, do **NOT** let the wound/bandage get wet
- Occasionally an incisional wound vac dressing is used. This stays on for 1 week & should **NOT** get wet

Do NOT Submerge the Wound

- Avoid baths, Hot tubs, Swimming pools, etc. for at least **6 weeks after surgery**

Compression Stockings

- Wear compression stockings for **6 weeks**
- Helps reduce swelling and prevent blood clots

Skin & Incision Care

- Do **NOT** apply lotions, creams, or ointments to your incision for the first **6 weeks**

After the Incision Heals

- Once fully healed, you may use:
 - Any scar creams or vitamin E.
- Use **sunscreen over the incision** to help prevent darkening of the scar
 - *Only after the incision is fully healed*

Ice and Heat After Surgery

Using ice and heat correctly can help reduce pain and swelling during recovery.



Ice (Recommended Early After Surgery)

- **How to use:**
 - Place a **towel or cloth between the ice and your skin**
 - Apply ice for **15–20 minutes at a time**
- **How often:**
 - At least **3–4 times per day**
 - You may use more often if needed
 - Early after surgery:
 - Ice every **1-2 hours** is recommended

Heat (Avoid Early On)

- **Do NOT use heat** in the early post-operative period

Avoid Heat Products Early

- Do NOT use: Ben-Gay, Icy Hot, Etc.

Ice Machine (Optional)

- Ice machines can make icing easier and more consistent
 - Can add compression to improve swelling and pain
- Available for purchase at the brace shop
 - Insurance does not cover ice machines

Activity and Exercise After Surgery

Staying active is important for your recovery, but it's important to do so safely.

Weight Bearing

- You may **put weight on your leg as tolerated**
 - Unless instructed otherwise by Dr. Burrow
- Use your comfort level as a guide

Walking

- Walk around your home **multiple times per day**
- Short, frequent walks are best
 - This helps: Improve circulation, reduce swelling, & Prevent blood clots

Assistive Devices

- Use a **walker or crutches** as directed by physical therapist
 - Continue using them until cleared by physical therapy or surgical team

Driving

- Do **NOT drive while taking pain medication**
- Do **NOT drive until cleared** by your physical therapist or physician
- **Note:** Recovery time may be **longer for right knee replacements**

Exercises: First 2 Weeks After Surgery

Perform these exercises until you begin physical therapy or receive further instructions from your physician.

exercise pictures and instructions were chosen from HEP2go.com

Ankle Pumps

- **Frequency:** 10 times per hour while awake
- **How to perform:**
 - Move your foot **up and down at the ankle joint**
- **Why this helps:**
 - Improves blood flow
 - Helps prevent blood clots



Walking

- Walk using a **walker or crutches**
- **Gradually increase your distance** as tolerated
- **Tips:**
 - Take short, frequent walks
 - Listen to your body—do not overdo it



Incentive Spirometer (Breathing Exercise)

- **Frequency:** 10 times per hour while awake
- **How to perform:**
 - Exhale normally
 - Place your mouth tightly around the mouthpiece
 - Breathe in **slowly and deeply**
 - Watch the marker rise—try to get it as high as possible
 - Hold your breath for **1 second**, then relax
- **Why this helps:**
 - Keeps your lungs clear
 - Helps prevent pneumonia



Heel Slides

- **Frequency:** 3 times per day
- **Repetitions:** 10
- **Hold:** ~2 seconds
- **How to perform:**
 - Sit in a chair and place your foot on a **small towel**
 - Slowly slide your foot **toward you**, bending your knee
 - Hold for 2 seconds
 - Slide your foot back to the starting position
- **Tips:**
 - Move slowly and with control
 - Go as far as comfortable without forcing the motion



Extension Stretches

- **Frequency:** 3 times per day
- **Duration:** Hold for **5–10 minutes**
- **How to perform:**
 - Sit in a chair and place your foot on another chair or stool
 - Let your knee **straighten using gravity**
 - Gently press the back of your knee downward



Straight Leg Raise

- **Frequency:** 3 times per day
- **Repetitions:** 10
- **Hold:** ~2 seconds
- **How to perform:**
 - Lie on your back and keep your knee **straight**
 - Slowly raise your leg
 - Hold for 2 seconds, then lower slowly
- **Important:**
 - It may be difficult to lift your leg at first—**this is normal** . Continue trying and progress gradually



God Bless your recovery! I have already prayed for you during your surgery and will continue to do so. ZPB