



SCAN TO WATCH VIDEO

Arthritis on Hip & Knee X-rays

X-rays are the primary imaging tool for assessing hip and knee arthritis. They reveal joint space narrowing, subchondral sclerosis, osteophytes, and deformity — the hallmarks of osteoarthritis. Yet imaging findings never determine when surgery is needed. A patient with severe X-ray changes may not require surgery, while another with moderate changes may be significantly limited. Symptoms always guide the decision.

THE TECHNIQUE

01 Weight-Bearing X-ray

Standing X-rays under load reveal joint space more accurately than supine.

02 Key Imaging Features

Joint space narrowing, osteophytes, sclerosis, and deformity assessed.

03 Kellgren-Lawrence Scale

Grading system (0–4) used to classify arthritis severity on X-ray.

04 The Decision to Operate

Symptoms and quality of life drive decisions — not X-ray grade alone.

AT A GLANCE

IMAGING

Weight-Bearing XR

GRADING

Kellgren-Lawrence

MRI

Rarely Required

DECISION

Symptom-Driven

“The X-ray tells us the anatomy.

The patient tells us the story.”

— Dr Chien-Wen Liew

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Do I need an MRI for arthritis?

Not usually. Weight-bearing X-rays are the standard investigation. MRI is reserved for specific diagnostic questions such as early avascular necrosis.

Q. My X-ray looks severe — but I am not in much pain. Do I need surgery?

No. Surgery is recommended based on symptoms and function, not X-ray severity. Many patients with advanced X-ray changes function very well.

Q. How often should I have my X-rays reviewed?

Annual review is reasonable for established arthritis, or sooner if symptoms change significantly. Dr Liew will advise a personalised schedule.

ABOUT THE SURGEON

Dr Chien-Wen Liew exclusively performs total hip replacements via the direct anterior approach and total knee replacements via kinematic alignment only. He utilises patient-specific technology for both procedures, and practices from Orthopaedics 360 — within the Eastwood Private Hospital Precinct.

Dr Chien-Wen Liew

Hip and Knee Replacement Surgeon

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