



SCAN TO READ MORE

Total Knee Replacement Recovery Guide

Recovery after total knee replacement is a gradual process that unfolds over weeks and months. Understanding what to expect at each stage helps patients participate more confidently in rehabilitation and avoid the common pitfalls of doing too much too soon. Most meaningful improvement occurs in the first three months, with further gains continuing through to 6–12 months.

THE TECHNIQUE

01 Days 1–3

Begin walking with a walker or crutches; focus on pain control, ice, and elevation.

02 Week 1–2

Short walks several times daily, home exercises, keep knee elevated; avoid overexertion.

03 Weeks 3–6

Visible improvement in pain and mobility; work on extension, bend, and gait pattern.

04 Weeks 7–12

Rebuild strength, balance, and stamina; transition away from walking aids.

05 3–12 Months

Return to normal daily life; full recovery between 6 and 9 months for most patients.

AT A GLANCE

HOSPITAL STAY
2–3 Days

WALKING AID
2–4 Weeks

DESK WORK
4–6 Weeks

FULL RECOVERY
6–12 Months

**“Recovery rewards consistency,
patience, and understanding.”**

— Dr Chien-Wen Liew

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. How long does recovery from a total knee replacement take?

Most patients improve substantially over 6 to 12 weeks, but full recovery — including strength and minimal swelling — can continue for 6 to 12 months. The majority of meaningful gains occur in the first three months.

Q. Is swelling normal after knee replacement surgery?

Yes. Swelling is expected and often comes and goes for several months. It is usually worst after activity and in the afternoon or evening. Ice and elevation help manage it.

Q. When can I return to exercise after a knee replacement?

Low-impact activities such as walking, cycling, and hydrotherapy are usually introduced gradually from around 6 to 12 weeks once walking and swelling are under reasonable control.

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

Orthopaedics 360 · Eastwood Private Hospital, Adelaide SA

General educational purposes only. AHPRA Registered Specialist.