

Car Transfers After a Hip Replacement

On the day you are discharged from the hospital after your hip replacement, you will be taken to your car in a wheelchair. This brochure will give you some helpful suggestions for getting into and out of your car and having a safe and comfortable ride home.

If you have any questions, please ask your occupational therapist.

You must follow these hip dislocation precautions (movements to be avoided) at all times:

- Do not cross your legs past your midline (at your ankles, knees or hips).
- Do not turn your knees or toes inward (“pigeon toes” or reaching your toes or feet across your body).
- Do not bend your hips (flexion) beyond 90 degrees. Your knees should be below your hips when sitting.

Preparing the car

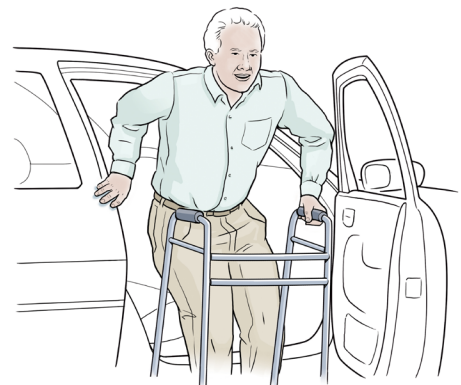
Ask your family to bring an extra pillow for comfortable positioning. You may want to place it on the seat of the car to raise its height and help ensure you will not bend beyond 90 degrees at the hip. Before getting in the car:

- Keep the front seat clear of any objects such as purses, cell phones and sunglasses.
- Move the front passenger seat as far back as it will go. Recline the seat slightly to give yourself more room.

Getting into the car

- Position the wheelchair on the front passenger side of the car.
- Make sure the wheelchair is locked before standing up.
- Use your walker or crutches to walk to the car.
- Turn around so your backside is lined up with the seat and you feel your legs touching the edge of the seat (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Backing into the car



- Place your walking aid(s) in one hand or give the aid(s) to the person who helped you to your car.
- Place your left hand on the doorframe or dashboard of the car and your right hand on top of the passenger seat for support before sitting down. Do not hold on to the car door because it could move.
- Make sure your recovering leg is extended in front of you to prevent too much bending of the hip.
- After you are safely seated, scoot back toward the driver's seat as far as possible.
- Avoid turning your recovering leg inward or twisting your body as you bring your legs into the car. Recline your seat and lean back as you bring your legs into the car in order to maintain at least 90 degrees between your thigh and torso (Figure 2). You may have someone help you bring your recovering leg into the car.

Figure 2. Lifting your legs



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While riding in the car

Remember to:

- Keep your legs apart
- Keep your knees below the level of your hips
- Do not turn your operated leg inward (no “pigeon toes”)
- Always wear your seat belt

Getting out of the car

- To get out of the car, reverse the process.
- If possible, have someone waiting with your walker or crutches.
- Wait until you are stable to take your walking aid(s).

Follow these instructions for as long as your physician has told you to do so.