MUST HAVES FROM SKYCADDIE, BLUE TEES & SUN MOUNTAIN

GOLFTIPS®

THE GAME'S IN-DEPTH INSTRUCTION & EQUIPMENT MAGAZINE

www.golftipsmag.com

- PXG REDEFINES CLUB-FITTING
- DO THE STOMP SWING
- CHIP AWAY AT YOUR SCORE
- TWO WAYS TO HIT IT FARTHER

& MORE!

ROAD TO THE LPGA

Epson Tour Takes Women's Pro Golf To The Next Level

PLUS Remembering Tim N. Kremer

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022

REPLACE, RECOVER, RETURN

A Joint Replacement Timeline

By Dr. Angelica Napolitano, PT, DPT
Optimal Physical Therapy and Wellness, LLC

You've made it to the golden years! Time to sit back, relax and have…surgery? Yes, this may be true for some, especially if you suffer from arthritis that is "bone-on-bone"—a disadvantage to retirement that is unavoidable if this painful condition happens to you.

Thankfully, joint replacement surgery has come a long way in recent years, and more and more people can quickly return to the activities they love after surgery. This article will help you better understand what joint replacement surgery is, how it has evolved, who is at risk and when you can expect to get back to doing what you love—golf.

Before discussing when to return to golf after joint replacement, it is mandatory to have an idea about different joint replacement surgeries. This will give a better understanding of the different types of procedures, their purposes and the amount of time it takes to recover.

Different Joint Replacement Surgeries

The three most common types of joint replacement surgeries occur at the hip, knee and shoulder. For those over the age of 50, it is usually due to the development of arthritis, specifically osteoarthritis, a degenerative disease affecting the entire joint, from the ligaments to the tendons, cartilage and bone. Not every aging

person over 50 will develop these injuries; in fact, most people will never be affected, and then there are those under 50 who are affected. This is most rare and will only occur if you've had previous or recurring injury to a joint or if you've had surgery such as an ACL reconstruction. So the key here is really about taking care of yourself by staying active, healthy and maintaining a normal weight so that you can prolong the life span of your mobility and independence.

The amount of time it takes to recover from each type of surgery will depend on location, severity, age and other medical reasons that are unique and will vary from person to person. To put it simply, the hip will be the easiest recovery while the knee will be the hardest. This is because the hip is a relatively simple joint compared to the knee. The knee requires more bone and tissue removal and must stabilize off-centered loading patterns and lateral movements, like weight shifting in the golf swing. Also, there is much more stretching of the involved soft tissue that must be done post-surgery when compared to a hip or shoulder.

Recovery And Return

Be aware that recovery and return to sport are two very different timelines with different functional capacities. Recovery is the overall healing process whereby the wound heals, and you are able to do activities of daily living without compromising the surgery, and return to sport is that plus being able to put your body through more intense physical activity that you normally don't do every day.

To put a number on it, most people will recover from a joint replacement surgery in anywhere from three to 12 months, with return to sport usually in the six- to eight-month window. No, this does not mean it will be a year before you can play golf again, and remember, we must take into account ALL factors of a person's lifestyle and health when it comes to healing. The more comorbidities and risk factors you have, the longer it will take.

It is important to follow your surgeon's post-op recommendations, such as any movement precautions you may have and, most importantly, your rehab protocol. This will be pivotal not only in your return to play but also in the long-term health of your joint and avoiding more surgeries in the future.

A story I'll never forget was this one patient who came to me following a total knee replacement, and this guy was an avid golfer. I'm talking five to six days a week, maybe even seven; golf was life. So you can imagine his frustration after surgery and not being able to play. Initially, he was doing well, range of motion and strength were beginning to make a comeback, and he was starting to feel less and less pain. Knowing he was fanatical and very eager to make a return, I made sure to educate him heavily each session on his status and what was and was not acceptable for him to be participating in at that point of his recovery.

Against his better judgment, however, he decided to go to the driving range only five weeks after having the surgery. I was not happy with him and advised him to stop doing that immediately, once again educating him on the potential damage and harm he could cause himself, but he couldn't stop. Long story short, this patient ended up being rushed to the ER one night because his knee became so swollen and was filled with blood and infection, requiring an emergency draining before he got septic, and then, guess what? He had to have the surgery replaced! Yes, a replacement after about nine weeks of being replaced initially.

In the end, he was not welcome back to my clinic for therapy after his second surgery. He was too much of a headache and liability. Don't be that patient.

Don't Be Afraid, You're Not Alone

Just ask Fred Funk. After his knee was replaced in 2009, he was the first to win a major championship (the Senior U.S. Open) with an artificial knee and has gone on to win three more since. He put forth significant effort in physical therapy and was committed to the return.

"My message to people is don't be scared to have a joint replacement," he has said. "It's a big deal to have a joint replaced, but it's a bigger deal to be living in chronic pain."

Despite his joint replacement, Funk has continued to play golf and says he's feeling better than ever.

"I feel like I'm in my 40s again," Funk has said. "I don't have any pain, and I'm able to play golf without any problem. In fact, I just shot my best round ever last week."

Funk isn't the only one who has been able to return to the golf course after joint replacement surgery. Dr. James Andrews, a world-renowned orthopedic surgeon, has performed joint replacement surgery on many professional athletes, including several PGA TOUR players.

"We see a lot of patients who are avid golfers, and they are always concerned about whether or not they'll be able to return to the sport after surgery," Dr. Andrews said. "Fortunately, with the advances we've made in joint replacement surgery, most patients are able to return to their normal activities, including golf."

To put it simply, the hip will be the easiest recovery while the knee will be the hardest.

While there is no guarantee that every patient will be able to return to the golf course after joint replacement surgery, the vast majority of patients do experience significant pain relief and improved quality of life. So if you're facing joint replacement surgery, don't despair—there's a good chance you'll be back out on the links in no time.

Surgery Can Be Life-Changing

Hip, knee and shoulder replacements are common as we age, but staying fit and healthy throughout your lifetime can help prevent the development and onset of pain from arthritis. Surgery is considered a last resort only after you've exhausted all your conservative, less-invasive options but can be life-changing for those who need it.

If you're considering a replacement or are in the process of healing from one, I hope you gained knowledge and peace of mind from reading this article. As always, please consult your physiotherapist and surgeon for specific advice about your case. We wish you all the best on your road to recovery. **GT**

ASK THE DOC

With Dr. Angelica Napolitano, PT, DPT, aka the "Golf Doc"

Welcome to our "Ask the Doc" column, where I answer real questions from real people regarding their golf game and the physical limitations that may impact their ability to perform. I am a board-certified doctor of physical therapy and golf rehab and performance specialist. Each month, I will choose questions at random to answer. To enter your question for future editions, please email golftipsmag@gmail.com and keep a lookout each month to see if your question was featured.

Q: *I read your article in* Golf Tips Magazine. *I have a shoulder injury, and my knees are bone-on-bone. So far, acupuncture has helped a lot. What other treatments would you recommend for someone like me who is bone-on-bone that would provide relief? Also, I live in Connecticut. Do you have any offices nearby for a consultation on my issues or any doctors you can recommend to me?*

—Selina K., Connecticut

A: Hi, thanks for writing in with this question. That "bone-on-bone" pain you are feeling is what's known as osteoarthritis, which is when the cartilage that cushions the joint breaks down and therefore causes inflammation and pain. It generally occurs in aging populations, among those individuals who may be carrying excess weight, and people with overuse issues, poor alignment and family genes. Secondary causes usually stem from previous surgery or trauma, which is likely associated with an earlier onset if either of those events happened before the age of 35. Identifying your risk factors and cause is important when considering treatment options and your overall prognosis.

The majority of those suffering with osteoarthritis are individuals 50+, with women being affected more than men. This is the age where things begin to break down as our bodies go through yet another change in their lifecycles. That's why it is crucial to take care of your younger self if you want to enjoy those retirement years because, as I mentioned in a previous article, prevention is key to sustaining a long, healthy life. Once the damage has been done, however, you need to weigh out all your options.

For postmenopausal females, incorporating food sources fortified with vitamin D or supplementing it into your diet is critical for your bone health. Adequate water intake, exercise and proper nutrition can also help prevent and mitigate symptoms, and having your hormones checked is another vital strategy for arthritis sufferers.

Finding a physical therapist who will spend time incorporating skilled manual therapy techniques accompanied by a guided exercise program will also be key to managing your pain, and research has shown these interventions to be highly effective and more long term when used in combination. I do not have an office in Connecticut, but a quick internet search or checking the TPI directory are good resources in helping you find a good PT. I will add a link to the TPI directory below; however, it is important that you ask these questions when searching for a good therapist who's right for you:

Will I be one-on-one during my session?

Will I have the same therapist every time?

How much time is spent on manual therapy each session and how much on exercise?

Will I get a progressive home exercise program?

Are you cash or insurance based?

Follow this link to access the TPI directory (www.mytpi.com/experts), and make sure you choose "medical professional" in the search dropdown menus. **GT**

If you're interested in learning more or would like to have your questions answered in the next edition, please email me at golftipsmag@gmail.com. Stay tuned for future publications!

DISCLAIMER: *The advice and recommendations given here are intended to be purely educational and not to serve as or replace any medical advice given by your doctor or any other medical professional. Please consider the risks before trying any of the recommended suggestions and understand that Golf Tips Magazine and the author of this column are not to be held responsible or liable should any persons attempt to recreate this advice with resultant harm and/or physical consequence or repercussion. We advise that you consult with your doctor for proper medical clearance before any attempts are made and please do so at your own risk.*