THE PATIENT’S MANUAL TO
JOINT REPLACEMENT
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If you’re dealing with joint pain, you know how drastically it can affect your daily life. Fortunately, there are ways to find relief so you can get back to the activities you once enjoyed.

In this e-book, you’ll learn:

- What a joint is and the parts that keep you functioning properly
- Symptoms of a damaged joint
- Diseases and conditions that can lead to damaged joints
- Non-surgical treatment methods
- Surgical treatment methods
ANATOMY OF A JOINT

A joint is the place in the body where two bones come together to enable movement in that particular part of the body. The ends of the each bone are covered in tissue called articular cartilage. Articular cartilage provides cushioning for the bones and reduces friction so that they can easily slide against each other without causing discomfort. The synovial membrane lines the joint and seals the joint capsule which provides stability to the joint. The synovial membrane also secretes synovial fluid that lubricates the joint and aids in ease of motion.

The outside of the joint is surrounded by ligaments and tendons. Ligaments support the joint and limit its movement and tendons attach to muscles to control the movement of the joint.
JOINT PAIN AND SYMPTOMS OF A DAMAGED JOINT

As you can see, many different parts must come together to make a working joint. If any one of these parts is not functioning properly, or is affected by a disease or injury, it will cause the entire joint to malfunction. Injury or joint disease can also make it nearly impossible for a patient to perform certain movements and actions due to the following symptoms:

- Swelling
- Inflammation
- Limited range of motion
- Extreme pain

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DISEASES AND CONDITIONS

Whether it’s from trauma, overuse, disease, or a medical condition, there are many different causes of joint injuries. The following will discuss the most common causes of joint injuries.

Overuse Injury

The knee, hip, and ankle are weight-bearing joints that have a lot of stress put on them every day. This added stress causes the cartilage to wear away quickly. When someone participates in a sport or an activity that requires them to perform the same repetitive motion with a certain joint, this joint could become damaged due to overuse.
Arthritis
One cause of joint damage is arthritis, a disease that results in joint inflammation, pain, and stiffness. There are different types of arthritis that cause symptoms to occur in patients. The only way to correct the damage caused by arthritis is to undergo a joint replacement.

Osteoarthritis
This form of arthritis causes the articular cartilage to break down and wear away. When this happens, the ends of the bones begin rubbing directly against one another which causes inflammation and a great deal of pain.

Rheumatoid Arthritis
Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disease where the immune system attacks itself, as well as the synovial fluid that lubricates the joints. This process causes the cartilage in the joints to wear away and cause further damage.

Non Rheumatoid Inflammatory Arthritis
This disease can be caused by medical conditions such as gout, infection, or other inflammatory conditions.
NON-SURGICAL TREATMENT METHODS

Dealing with joint pain drastically affects your quality of life, but fortunately, there are ways to find relief. Talk to your doctor about choosing a non-surgical treatment method that’s right for you. Learn more about these treatment methods to find out how to relieve your joint pain.

Daily Exercise

One way to reduce joint pain is by creating a daily workout regimen that allows you to exercise your entire body at a moderate intensity level. For people with joint pain from any source, cross training is often useful. Cross training involves alternating among different means of cardiovascular conditioning in successive exercise sessions, such as on alternate days. Often, cross training in joint pain patients involves weight bearing exercise, such as walking, on one day alternating with non-weight bearing exercises, such as swimming or biking, on the next day. While you may think that moving your joints will cause you more pain, exercise actually helps to provide flexibility to your joints when they’re feeling stiff. Also, it helps strengthen the muscles in your body rather than putting additional stress on your joints.

If you’re overweight, it’s crucial that you exercise daily in order to shed the weight that’s putting excessive stress on your joints. Talk to your doctor about creating a personalized workout regimen that will allow you to lose weight safely and effectively to improve your health overall.
Injections
Some doctors may recommend injections to relieve the pain in your joint and help you resume normal activities. This treatment involves injecting a corticosteroid or hyaluronic acid directly into the joint to reduce pain. Corticosteroid injections are beneficial because they work quickly and can last for several weeks or even several months. Hyaluronic acid injections help to lubricate a diseased joint and encourage joint lining, or synovial, cells to produce more normal joint fluid. If beneficial, hyaluronic acid injection can help for up to six months and can be repeated.

JOINT REPLACEMENT SURGERY
If you’ve been dealing with joint pain and non-surgical methods have not been effective in relieving your pain, joint replacement may be an option. Joint replacement is a common surgical procedure that involves removing the damaged portion of the joint and replacing it with a prosthetic. While this procedure is fairly straightforward, it’s best to understand everything that will be involved so you’re thoroughly prepared for the process.
Preparation

You’ll be preparing for the procedure in the weeks before your surgery. Your doctor will examine your overall health to make sure surgery is safe for you, and you may undergo a few tests, such as blood tests, in preparation for the surgery.

Eating healthy foods in the weeks leading up to your surgery will also be beneficial in helping you heal properly. Foods such as vegetables, fruits, and proteins will provide the essential vitamins necessary for your body to recover.

If you smoke, your doctor will advise you to stop smoking well in advance of your joint replacement. It’s well-known that smoking is associated with a significantly increased risk of postoperative complications after joint replacement surgery.

In addition to eating healthy and not smoking, be sure to prepare your home so that it’s easier to manage after your surgery. You can set up a station with the phone, television remote, and a comfortable spot to sleep. If you’re having joint replacement surgery on your knee or hip that makes walking difficult, it’s helpful to set up a bed on the first floor of your home. You may also want to arrange for a friend or family member to be on-call if you need them, and to assist you with daily activities while you’re recovering.
Total Joint Replacement
The day of your surgery, you’ll be in a hospital or an outpatient surgery center for the procedure.

Before the surgery, you’ll be administered anesthesia so you won’t feel pain. The surgeon will make incisions in your skin, then remove the damaged pieces of cartilage and bone. Prosthetic components made of metal, plastic, or ceramic will then replace your damaged joint.

The replacements will depend on the specific type of joint injury you’re dealing with. For example, if you’re having a hip replacement, you’ll have both a ball prosthetic component and a socket prosthetic component. The damaged ball, which is the upper end of the femur, will be replaced with a metal ball and a metal stem that fits into the bone. The socket will also be replaced with a plastic socket that is implanted into the pelvis.

These prosthetics will mimic the movement of the natural joint. After recovery, it will feel like your original joint, and will allow you to move normally and without pain once again.

Partial Joint Replacement
In some joint injuries, only part of the joint is damaged and only that portion needs to be replaced. A partial joint replacement typically requires slightly less recovery time because less of the bone is being removed and the incision is usually smaller.
RECOVERY
After the surgery, your doctor will likely encourage you to begin using the new replacement almost immediately. It’s important to allow the incisions to heal, but it’s also important for your body to begin to adapt to the new joint. During recovery, an emphasis will be placed on working to regain range of motion in your new joint as soon as possible. This will allow you to be more comfortable and perform activities normally. You’ll experience mild to moderate pain after surgery as your body adjusts to the implant and your muscles become active again.

Physical Therapy
Physical therapy and daily exercise are crucial when recovering from joint replacement surgery. Your doctor will recommend that you see a physical therapist to restore movement in the joint.

During physical therapy, you’ll attend several sessions per week and perform repetitive exercises and stretches that promote flexibility and strengthen the joints. You’ll work with a physical therapist who will guide you through specific activities to perform.

Possible Complications
While joint replacement is a safe procedure that helps improve the quality of life for many people dealing with joint injuries, there is always a risk of complication after major surgery. Your doctor will discuss the risks in detail with you to be sure that you’re prepared. Some of the usual complications of joint replacement surgery include blood clots, nerve injury, and infection.
KEEPING JOINTS HEALTHY
While it’s not always possible to prevent joint damage from occurring, there are ways to keep joints healthy and reduce the risk of joint damage. Keep the following tips in mind to promote healthy joints and to help prevent injuries.

Warm Up and Cool Down
Before you participate in moderate or intense physical activity, it’s important to warm up first. A fifteen-minute, low-intensity warmup that engages all the body parts you’ll be using during your activity will prepare your joints for the more intense exercise that follows.

It’s just as important to cool down after any physical activity. When you’re finished with the intense exercise, go back to low intensity for fifteen minutes to allow your joints to relax and muscles to cool down.

Rest
Overuse joint injuries are very common and typically occur because patients aren’t allowing their joints to rest properly. Be sure to take a break from your sport, job, or activity that is causing stress on the joint in order to reduce the risk of damage.

Don’t Ignore Pain
If you’re experiencing joint pain, it’s vital to address it and treat it as soon as possible. When you ignore joint pain, it could escalate and become much worse. See your doctor at the first sign of any joint pain.
CONCLUSION
If you’re dealing with a painful joint injury and non-surgical methods have not relieved your pain, joint replacement surgery may be the right choice for you. Contact Premier Orthopaedics to find a reputable surgeon to perform your joint replacement surgery and help you get back to your normal life.