

Get Your Home Ready: The Full Prep Checklist

This is general education, not personal medical advice. **Your surgical team's instructions always override this program.** Ask your surgeon, nurse, or physical therapist about anything on this list before you buy or change anything at home.

Setting up your home *before* surgery is one of the easiest ways to make your first few weeks of recovery safer and less stressful. Do this checklist 1–2 weeks before your surgery date so you have time to test everything out ([MedlinePlus](#)).

No studies have directly tested whether a home-prep checklist changes your recovery outcome. This is safety and comfort guidance based on what hospitals and surgeons commonly recommend — not a claim that it will speed your recovery.

1. Fall-Proofing Your Home

Falls are one of the biggest risks after joint replacement, so clearing your path matters as much as any equipment you buy.

- ☐ Remove all loose rugs, mats, and electrical or phone cords from the floors and walkways you'll use ([AAOS OrthoInfo](#)).
- ☐ Limit stair use to about once a day, if possible ([MedlinePlus](#)).
- ☐ Set up a temporary living space on one floor so you can avoid stairs altogether for the first stretch of recovery ([AAOS OrthoInfo](#); [MedlinePlus](#)).
- ☐ Place a sturdy, firm-backed chair with armrests in each room you'll use — kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, living room — so you always have a safe place to sit ([MedlinePlus](#)).
- ☐ Make sure your bed is low enough that your feet touch the floor when you sit on the edge, and that your mattress is firm enough that you don't sink in ([MedlinePlus](#)).
- ☐ Keep a phone within reach at all times — a portable or cell phone works well ([MedlinePlus](#)).

Grabbing tool / reacher

What to look for: a lightweight reacher, 26–32 inches long, with a secure jaw grip and rotating head, so you can pick things up without bending or twisting ([AAOS OrthoInfo](#)).

Typical price range: \$10–\$25.

Long-handled shoehorn

What to look for: a rigid, extended handle (12–24 inches) so you can put shoes on without bending your hip or knee past your surgeon's limits ([AAOS OrthoInfo](#)).

Typical price range: \$8–\$15.

2. Bathroom Safety

The bathroom is one of the highest-risk rooms after surgery because of hard, slippery surfaces and low seating.

- ☐ Install safety bars or handrails near the toilet and in the shower or tub ([AAOS OrthoInfo](#)).
- ☐ Set up a bathroom (or portable commode) on the same floor where you'll spend most of your time ([MedlinePlus](#)).

Raised toilet seat

What to look for: a seat that adds 3–6 inches of height, with or without armrests, that locks securely onto your existing toilet bowl so your hip or knee doesn't have to bend as far to sit or stand ([AAOS OrthoInfo](#)).

Typical price range: \$25–\$70.

Grab bars

What to look for: bars rated to hold at least 250–300 lbs, installed into wall studs (not just adhesive), placed near the toilet and inside the shower or tub ([AAOS OrthoInfo](#)).

Typical price range: \$15–\$40 per bar (installation cost separate).

Shower chair or bench

What to look for: a non-slip rubber feet base, a weight rating that fits your needs, and a seat wide/stable enough to sit safely while showering; a bench that extends outside the tub can make transfers easier ([AAOS OrthoInfo](#)).

Typical price range: \$30–\$90.

Long-handled sponge and shower hose

What to look for: an extended-handle sponge (12+ inches) so you can wash your legs and feet without bending, plus a handheld shower hose if your shower doesn't already have one ([AAOS OrthoInfo](#)).

Typical price range: \$10–\$25.

3. Your Recovery Station

Set up one “home base” — often a favorite chair or the couch — with everything you'll need close by so you're not walking back and forth in your first days home.

- ☐ Put items you use often within easy reach, between waist and shoulder height, so you don't have to bend down or reach up on your toes ([AAOS OrthoInfo](#); [MedlinePlus](#)).
- ☐ Keep your phone, a notepad, pen, medication list, and remote controls within arm's reach ([MedlinePlus](#)).

Walker bag or basket

What to look for: a bag or basket that attaches securely to your walker's front bar, big enough to carry your phone, glasses, and a water bottle, without blocking your view of the ground ([MedlinePlus](#)).

Typical price range: \$12–\$25.

Firm-backed chair with armrests

What to look for: armrests at a height that let you push up to stand, and a seat that isn't too low or too soft ([MedlinePlus](#)).

Typical price range: varies widely; many people use a chair they already own — a firm cushion (\$15–\$30) can raise seat height if needed.

4. Kitchen & Meal Prep

Plan to make cooking easy — or unnecessary — for at least the first two weeks.

- ☐ Prepare about 2 weeks' worth of meals ahead of time: cook and freeze, buy ready-made meals, or schedule a meal delivery service ([AAOS OrthoInfo](#)).
- ☐ Stock up on canned or frozen food, and household staples like toilet paper and shampoo, so you don't need to shop right after surgery ([MedlinePlus](#)).
- ☐ Store food, dishes, and other supplies in cupboards between waist and shoulder height ([MedlinePlus](#)).
- ☐ Place items you use a lot — like your glasses or teapot — on the counter, not in high cabinets ([MedlinePlus](#)).

5. Transportation & Help Planning

Line up your support team before surgery day, not after.

- ☐ Arrange for someone to drive you home from the hospital and to appointments, since you won't be able to drive right away ([AAOS OrthoInfo](#), "[Getting Ready for Joint Replacement](#)").
- ☐ Ask a family member or friend to stay with you for the first several days if you live alone ([AAOS OrthoInfo](#)).
- ☐ Arrange help with bathing, using the toilet, cooking, running errands, and shopping for the first couple of weeks ([MedlinePlus](#)).
- ☐ Arrange pet care, such as a dog-walker, if you have pets that need daily walks or care you won't be able to provide right away ([AAOS OrthoInfo](#)).
- ☐ Ask your care team about a temporary disabled parking permit if you'll need one during recovery ([AAOS OrthoInfo](#)).
- ☐ This kind of practical planning is part of the “maximizing functional independence” guidance that surgical guidelines recommend discussing before surgery ([NICE NG157](#)).

6. What to Bring to the Hospital

Pack your hospital bag a few days ahead so you're not rushing on surgery day.

- ☐ Loose-fitting, comfortable clothing and a robe or sweater ([Mayo Clinic](#)).

- ☐ Comfortable, non-skid walking shoes or slippers — slip-ons or shoes with elastic laces are easier to manage after surgery ([Mayo Clinic](#)).
- ☐ Personal care items: toothbrush, comb, shampoo, and similar toiletries ([Mayo Clinic](#)).
- ☐ Glasses, hearing aids, dentures, and any walker, cane, or crutches you already use ([Mayo Clinic](#)).
- ☐ Phone charger ([Mayo Clinic](#)).
- ☐ A list of your current medications — prescription, over-the-counter, and supplements — including doses ([Mayo Clinic](#)).
- ☐ Any registration forms, medical records, or imaging your care team asked you to bring ([Mayo Clinic](#)).

Ask your surgical team directly which medications to take or pause the morning of surgery, and any hospital-specific packing instructions — this checklist doesn't replace their guidance.

This checklist reflects general educational guidance from AAOS, MedlinePlus (NIH), NICE, and Mayo Clinic. It is not personalized medical advice. Confirm every item and change with your surgical team before your procedure.