

Orthopaedic Observations

A Matter of Medicine...

TM Pending

Optimizing Your Post-Op Recovery

By Karen Strouse, BSN



Keeping on track with a healthy lifestyle is not only imperative for everyday use, but also for postoperative rehabilitation.

After weeks or months of limited movement, it is easy to put on a few pounds. Do not fear—losing that weight can be almost as easy as it was to gain it.

Drastic diet changes and trips to the gym five days a week are not necessarily the only ways to get back into shape. By practicing a variety of quick and simple lifestyle changes, you can lose weight without breaking too much of a sweat.

- When using a car, don't park in the closest available spot. Pick a parking space further back in the lot so you can squeeze in an extra few minutes of walking. Cold weather isn't an excuse—put on an extra sweater before you leave the house.

- Instead of taking the elevator every day in the office, take the stairs. You'll feel so accomplished, you will think twice before heading for the vending machine at the end of the hallway.



- If you're not one for heavy exercising, choose an activity that is less severe. Swimming, biking, walking and ellipticals are easy on the joints, which is very helpful after any kind of surgery. Even 20 or 30 minutes a day are enough to make a difference. Anything that will get your cardiovascular system working a bit is good for recovery.

Did you know? Exercise is a great way of releasing stress. Whether it is taking a stroll in the park or running a couple of miles, the body releases endorphins which are natural pain relievers.

Getting extra exercise is only half the battle. Diet and nutritious eating habits are equally important to a speedy and healthy recovery.

It is okay to indulge every once in awhile. But instead of going right for the richest item on the menu, try some alternatives. Not only are they delicious, they also show the results that you want to see on your body.

- The television is notorious for being a cause of absent minded eating. Next time you turn on the tube, have an apple with peanut butter instead of a bag of potato chips.
- Standing in line at a store can be a bore. Boredom can often be mistaken for hunger. Don't succumb to this faulty emotion and buy candy to snack during the wait. If you must have something, go for nuts such as almonds, walnuts or chestnuts. Nuts are filled with healthy omega-3 and 6 fatty acids.
- Serving sizes are existent for a reason— do not ignore them. While a healthy food like nuts is a great snack, eating 50 of them during a sitting, packs on unnecessary fat and calories.
- Increase fruit and vegetable intake. The large amount of fiber will satisfy you quickly without bringing in a large amount of calories.
- Drink more water! It lubricates organs and joints, improves skin health, eliminates toxins, regulates metabolism and more. Eight glasses is the daily recommendation for an average adult. Try to go easy on flavored waters: they often contain artificial sweeteners which are bad for your health.



(article continued on back side of page...)

Continued from Page 1

Substitute white bread and bagels with whole wheat. Fiber decreases the appetite and is quicker to digest.

- Although deep fried food is often delicious, replace it with some lean meat, poultry or fish.

Following these simple tips is the first step to getting back into the best shape you can be. If it seems a little intimidating at first, make just one or two changes a day. Before you know it, you will be enjoying a new healthy lifestyle and reaping all the benefits.

To learn more, search online or ask your doctor.

Karen received her Bachelors of Nursing degree from SUNY Binghamton. She has extensive experience in critical care, homecare, and rehab nursing. She joined The Orthopaedic Group in 2005 as the Orthopaedic Nurse Associate for Dr. John Irving, and Dr. Christopher Lynch. She can be reached by e-mail at Karen_Strouse@med3000.com.