

Car Transfers

How to safely get in and out of a car

*This handout has instructions for how to safely get in and out of a car after total hip or knee joint replacement surgery. **Make sure that the car seat is slid all the way back and reclined.** Your therapist may show you different ways to get in and out of a car depending on your situation. Follow the instructions you are given.*

If You Had *Posterior* Hip Surgery:

- Do not bend forward more than 90°
- Do not cross your legs
- Do not roll your surgical leg inward

If you Had *Lateral* Hip Surgery:

- Do not lift leg sideways away from you
- Do not flex your hip more than 120° (not all surgeons require this instruction)

Into the Car:

- Back up to the car until the back of your legs touch the car
- Hold onto car frame or seat (not the car door, walker, or crutches) as you slowly sit down
- Scoot back toward the driver seat
- Lean back
- Pivot on your bottom, gradually move legs into car
- If you had lateral hip surgery: use leg lifter to move surgical leg to the side
- If you had posterior hip surgery: do not twist knee inward. Keep foot in line with the knee. Lean back and bend at the hip to clear footwell. Do not bend hip more than 90°



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Out of the Car:

- Scoot toward the driver seat
- Pivot on your bottom
- Pivot legs out of car without twisting
- Lean back and scoot your bottom forward until you are at the edge of the seat
- Hold onto the car seat or frame (not the door) and stand up
- Reach for your walker or crutches



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Safety tips:

- If you have had a *posterior* total hip replacement and the car seat lifts your knees higher than your hips, sit on a firm pillow to raise your hips.
- Place the pillow in a garbage bag, and then put it on the seat. This will make it easier for you to move on the seat.
- Always wear your seat belt.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Hip & Knee Center at Meridian Pavilion: Call 206.668.6360

For urgent needs when the clinic is closed: Call 206.598.6190 and ask to page the Orthopedic resident on call.