Physical Therapy After Hip Fracture in Older Adults

What New Guidelines Mean for You

With Hip Fracture in Older Adults

Researchers reviewed the most up-to-date research, summarized the results, and made recommendations for how physical therapists can help people with hip fractures best recover and return to their normal lives. The best care for people with hip fracture is delivered by a group of clinicians from different professions, including physical therapy. During the physical therapy examination, the therapist should assess things like pain, thigh muscle strength, and day-to-day tasks such as walking and standing up from a chair. In the early stage of recovery, physical therapists should help people with hip fracture get out of bed and move around as soon as possible. Physical therapists should also design an exercise program focused on strengthening the legs, balance, and mobility, and help people develop a plan to stay physically active once treatment is over.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

After your hip fracture, expect your physical therapist to test your leg strength and walking. You may also be asked to do a timed up-and-go test. The physical therapist will assess your risk for falling. Early on, physical therapy will include helping you get out of bed and move about until you can do so on your own or with assistive devices. Your treatment plan will include structured exercises, including strength training, balance training, and what is called “functional mobility training,” which helps you get back to your day-to-day activities. You may be asked to do some of these exercises at home, too. When you no longer need physical therapy, your physical therapist will help you find ways to stay physically active on your own. Remember, most hip fractures in older adults occur after falling, so it is important to ask your health care team what you can do to prevent falls.

WHAT THEY FOUND

This JOSPT Perspectives for Patients article was produced by Patient and Public Partnerships Editor Joletta Belton and a team of JOSPT’s editorial board and staff, led by Editor-in-Chief Clare Ardern, and illustrated by Jeanne Robertson. For this and more topics, visit JOSPT Perspectives for Patients online at www.jospt.org.