

Tips to prepare your home if you are having surgery

Trip Hazards

Have a good look round your home and remove any trip hazards you can see e.g., remove or secure loose rugs, any clutter particularly on the stairs. Although some items may have been there for years without causing problems, you are likely to be a bit more unsteady whilst you are recovering from surgery. Also, you might need to use a walking aid for a while, so you may need more space to pass in narrow areas.

Kitchen

Set up your kitchen to make sure everything you're likely to need is within easy reach – as bending or reaching up high might be a bit more difficult following your surgery.

Make sure you are stocked up with food. Premade meals or ready meals can be an easy option. Explore options for ordering groceries online for delivery.

Consider if there's room in the kitchen for a stool to rest if you get tired.

Bathroom

You might not be able to get into your bath - if you have one - for a while, so look into items for a strip wash. Make sure towels and soap/body wash are within easy reach of the bathroom sink. Is there space for a stool?

Getting to the toilet at night.

Make sure you get up slowly and sit on the edge of the bed for a few seconds particularly if you feel lightheaded.

Keep a torch by the side of the bed or consider fitting motion sensor lights along the route.

Footwear

Make sure you are wearing sturdy, comfortable footwear with a non-slip sole. A long-handled shoehorn might be helpful to reduce uncomfortable bending.

Stairs

Depending on your surgery, stairs might be difficult for a while, particularly if you need to use the stairs to access the toilet. It might be helpful to try to rearrange your home so you can live on one level, temporarily while you recover. This might involve moving a bed downstairs or having a commode on the floor where you don't have a toilet. Try to return to using your stairs though, as soon as you feel able, it'll help your mobility return.

Move regularly

Try to avoid sitting for too long. It will help your recovery to keep active. Speak to your surgical team about any particular exercises to avoid. Simple activities little and often to start with might be best. Try to continue to increase your activity levels. Listen to your body and increase slowly as you heal.

Other suggestions

- Change your bedding pre-operation
- Do laundry to ensure you have enough clean clothes (around 2 weeks' supply)
- Consider having a backpack to carry things around or keep them on one level.
- Make sure you always carry a mobile phone or have a pendent alarm within reach.
- There may be other pieces of equipment that might help support your safe independence at home. Some might be available for free via your local Adult Social Care Service e.g. grab rails, commodes and equipment to raise the height of your furniture. Other small gadgets e.g. to help you put on your socks are available to buy. The "Living made Easy" charity provides a guide to equipment which is available here <https://livingmadeeasy.org.uk/>

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