

Preparing for Hip Surgery: 7 Essential Steps to Feel Calm, Confident and in Control

Hip surgery can be one of life's biggest curveballs. You may have been dealing with pain for years or the decision came quickly, following a rapid decline. When I was preparing for my own hip surgery, I discovered that the journey was just as emotional as it was physical. There were practical things to get in place, yes — but there was also fear, frustration, and a deep desire to stay grounded and hopeful.

If you're preparing for your own surgery or supporting someone who is, here are seven steps that helped me feel more calm, confident, and in control.

Please note: I'm not a medical professional. This is not medical advice, just personal insight from someone who's been there. Every surgery, body and recovery journey is different. Always consult your healthcare team.

My Journey

Firstly, how did my journey come about and what made me produce this resource?

I have hip dysplasia and was told at age 25 I would not make 40 without 2 new hips. So I had 2 choices - accept I have this growing disability and keep a stick handy or refuse to let it control me until I can manage no more. Needless to say the second option won. I had a mindset that was very much based on:

➔ Keep moving: move or lose it. I had a very active life, with different sports and exercise routines. I am convinced that, although this helped me go on much longer before surgery, that I also overdid it towards the time I needed surgery.

➔ Stop when your hip/s hurt/s. I allowed myself to listen to my body. If it hurt, I stopped. I soon found out that walking gave me natural limits. These declined over the years and I felt ok about that. know when to ask for help.

Unfortunately, I left it a little late and it was only when I realised it was rapidly disintegrating that I sought surgery.

➔ Listen to loved ones. My friends noticed me stooping and limping before I did. I should have listened earlier.

There was a timeline of about 6 months where I became conscious that overexercising one day meant struggling the next. Then, suddenly I was dragging myself around and stooping, probably causing immense pressure on my other joints. Do not leave it that long.

1. Set Gentle, Flexible Physical Goals

Prepping your body doesn't mean pushing yourself. For me, a gentle short walk, completing the physio exercises, resting and doing one thing to engage my brain became a mindful routine. This worked as well before as it did afterwards. I aimed for gentle movement that helped me feel connected to my body, rather than frustrated by it.

Goal idea:

- Stay as mobile as possible without pain
- Practice pre-surgery breathing exercises
- Talk to your physio (if you have one) about safe movements

2. Prepare Emotionally: Acknowledge the Rollercoaster

You may feel hopeful one day and anxious the next. That's completely normal. Surgery can trigger fears around loss of independence, identity, or even confidence. Give yourself permission to feel all of it, without judgment. Be kind to yourself.

What helped me:

- Journaling how I felt each day
- Speaking affirmations out loud (yes, it felt weird... and yes, it helped)
- Connecting with others who understood (whilst remembering others' journeys are different to yours, so don't compare too much).

3. Plan Practically, One Step at a Time

I made checklists for what to take to hospital, how to set up my home for recovery, and even how to ask for help (which was hard!). This gave me a sense of calm: I couldn't control everything, but I could control some things. (the digital planner will contain a printable tick list of plans to make so you can keep it to hand).

Ideas include:

- Pack a hospital bag early (in case of a cancellation)
- Prepare meals in advance
- Have suitable clothes ready - from wide leg elasticated trousers to seamless underwear
- Have a bag with a strap ready to carry things - or even a tabard.
- Arrange transport and post-op support
- Remove trip hazards or adjust furniture
- We dig deeper into prep in the download.

4. Create a “Calm Corner” for Recovery

You'll be spending time resting - so why not make it healing? I set up a recovery space with a list of books I was itching to read, a blanket, journal, things to do (see the planner) and essential oils. That corner reminded me I was safe and supported.

5. Track Feelings as Well as Progress

We tend to measure recovery by physical milestones, but I found that tracking how I felt was just as important. The mental aspect absolutely threw me. Progress isn't always linear. On days I felt low, my journal reminded me how far I'd come.

Tracking spaces in the journal include:

- Pain level
- Meds taken (and a list of essential meds given at hospital)
- Mood
- Sleep quality
- Energy and motivation
- Small wins
- Goals

6. Speak Kindly to Yourself

➔ It's easy to fall into “I should be further along” thinking. However, just because your colleague's Aunt Margaret was up and about in 3 weeks doesn't mean you will be. Factors people forget about when telling you (meaning well) that they or someone else did “remarkably and so will you”:

- ➔ Some people work and some don't so those that don't need not worry about time off, returning to a place of work that may require adjustments or may not have understanding employers.
- ➔ Age can be a factor - or not! One fit 40 year old may recover much quicker than a very sedentary 80 year old. However, a fit 70 year old could recover quicker than a 35 year old with multiple health issues and two young children. Every journey is unique.
Some people have really good support networks - perhaps a partner who is retired or who can work from home and help out a lot. Others may live alone and end up doing almost everything unaided - which will quite likely lead to a longer recovery time.

Healing isn't a race. Each day is a chance to rest, restore, and rebuild. You're doing better than you think.

7. Use Tools That Help You Stay Grounded

That's why I created the Hip Surgery Preparation Planner - a printable tool filled with checklists, self-care prompts, journaling pages, and progress trackers. At the time of writing it is about to be available in hard copy form too. It's the resource I wish I'd had: something calm, clear, and comforting during a time of uncertainty, that fits with this specific type of surgery.

Want to feel more prepared and supported?

Download the Hip Surgery Planner here and take the next step with confidence. Get a file to pop the pages in and start planning/recording. You can do this!

[[CLICK HERE](#) to access the planner]