



# MANAGING YOUR PAIN

On a scale from zero to ten, your pain management goal is a 4 or below. This range is considered tolerable. Patients often describe this pain level as burning or sharp at the start of movement that lessens as your joint “warms up” but still allows you to rest. By actively managing your pain level you will best know how to rehabilitate your new joint.

**Repositioning:** Too much of any one activity can cause your muscles to tighten up and increase your pain. Active movement and adjusting your position occasionally helps to also allow your muscles to relax afterwards.

**Standing up:** Many individuals experience pain relief with weight-bearing through a new joint because it actively engages your supporting muscles. We are designed to be upright and to move.

**Distraction:** Good company, relaxing music, puzzles, books, and entertainment can help keep your mind from focusing on pain.

**Ice pack:** Swelling will be an issue to some degree for all individuals following a joint replacement surgery. Applying a cold pack will reduce blood flow to your incision area, decreasing your swelling. Remember to have a barrier between your skin and the ice pack. Apply for 20 minutes then remove for at least 20 minutes before reapplying.

**Pain medication:** Joint replacements are significant surgeries and medication can help control the amount of pain you experience. You will need to find a balance and a schedule that will allow you to participate in therapy as well as to rest. Honest open communication and planning ahead are important in this area of the recovery process.

**Relaxation and breathing techniques:** Actively reducing your stress through methods such as visualization, progressive muscle relaxation, or deep breathing can be powerful tools to enhance your comfort and your peace of mind.