

Patient Experience Hints & Tips

Surgery for a Broken Leg

- If you have an operation for a fractured leg, and are not allowed to put weight on it, there is a long path ahead.
- I had an operation to have a plate and screws inserted to repair a fractured tibia and fibula (lower leg) which were broken just below my knee.
- Following the operation I had a brace on my leg to keep it straight. Over the coming weeks this was gradually adjusted to allow me to bend my knee.
- Two days after the op the Physiotherapist showed me how to get in and out of bed using a Zimmer frame; they also showed me how to get in and out of a chair.
- The next day I was hopping using the Zimmer frame and making sure to keep the injured leg off the ground. This is very strenuous and I felt like I was climbing a mountain.
- After 12 days the staples closing the incision were removed.
- I was in hospital for almost 3 weeks and overall I was non-weightbearing for nearly 3 months (much longer than initially expected), although not all with a Zimmer frame.
- After a short while I progressed from the Zimmer frame to elbow crutches, and finally to a walking stick.
- When you are discharged from hospital it is important that you have someone there to look after you and help – not just in case of accidents but because you won't be able to negotiate stairs or stand for any length of time, and everything will be difficult for some while. I was lucky in that I was able to stay with my daughter for almost 3 months.
- I continued to have blood thinning injections every day for 2½ months.
- Once I could bend my knee I had physio sessions at the hospital and was allowed to start putting some weight on my leg. However it was almost four months before I was finally fully weightbearing.
- As soon as possible, it is important to try and have walk every day to build strength in injured leg, get your confidence back, and work towards getting back to normal.
- I had my final x-ray and consultation with the Orthopaedic Surgeon nearly 8 months after the operation.
- Recovery is a long journey but trying to remain positive is really important.