

# Is It Time for a Joint Replacement?

*A patient guide to deciding*

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There is rarely a single moment when a hip or knee replacement becomes the obvious answer. For most people it is a gradual decision, weighed up over time. This guide sets out the things worth thinking about, so you can have a clearer conversation about whether the time is right for you.

## It is your decision, guided by good advice

A replacement is an elective operation, which means it is your choice, made when the problem is affecting your life enough to be worth it to you. Two people with similar X-rays can reach very different decisions, and both can be right. The job of your consultation is to give you the honest information you need to choose well.

## Signs that often tip the balance

People often start to consider surgery when the pain is there at rest or at night and is disturbing sleep, when it limits the things that matter to them such as walking, work, hobbies or family life, and when the simpler measures have stopped giving enough relief. Growing stiffness, a limp, or leaning more and more on painkillers all add to the picture. None of these on its own decides it. Together they help you judge how much the joint is costing you.

## What to try first

Surgery is rarely the starting point. Weight management where it applies, staying active, physiotherapy, walking aids and, for some people, injections can all help, and Mr Oni will go through which of these are worth trying for you. A replacement becomes the sensible option when these are no longer keeping you comfortable and active.

## Why it can be worth not waiting too long

There is no need to rush, but leaving a very painful joint for years in the hope it settles can mean living with more limitation than you need to, and becoming less fit for surgery in the meantime. The aim is to choose the point where the benefit clearly outweighs the bother of an operation and a recovery.

## How to reach a decision

A consultation is the place to lay it all out. Mr Oni will examine you, review your imaging, and talk through your options including waiting, so that you leave with a clear sense of where you stand and what each path involves. You do not need to have decided anything before you come.

**No referral needed to ask:** You are welcome to book a consultation simply to understand your options, including a second opinion on advice you have had elsewhere.

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*This guide gives general information and is not a substitute for the personalised advice of Mr Oni and your physiotherapist. If you are worried about your symptoms or your recovery, please contact the practice.*