



Resource

## Rheumatoid arthritis and surgery

The decision to have any surgical procedure is understandably a very difficult one to make. All types of surgery carry risks to the individual and will require a recovery time. However, there can also be a lot of benefits to surgery, such as reducing pain and improving mobility.

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Surgery is used as a way of treating rheumatoid arthritis, once damage has occurred in a joint. Some surgeries will be more successful if undertaken at an earlier stage before any further damage has been done.

Like all areas of treatment, it is improving all the time, with new methods of surgery and new materials, such as implants and innovations, including 3D printing. Implants used in joint replacements last longer than ever before and recovery times have improved as more is understood about the best aftercare advice to give to patients.

There are many different types of surgery that rheumatoid arthritis patients (and those with other forms of inflammatory arthritis) may need because of their healthcare condition. This may include more minor surgery, such as the removal of bunions or more complex joint surgery, such as joint replacement or fusion. Often, surgery will require a period of stopping or reducing medications, and specific advice will be given for how long treatments are stopped for, depending on the nature of both the surgery and the drug.

Joint replacement surgery (for example hip or knee replacement) is less common now than it used to be, due to advancements in the treatment and management of RA. It is sometimes necessary, especially for people who have more severe rheumatoid arthritis or have had the condition for a long time.

Information on surgery, as well as personal accounts from people who have had the surgery themselves, can help with the decision of whether or not to proceed with surgery. It can also offer reassurance and answers about any concerns you may have.

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[either the joints or the soft tissue, such as nerves and](#)

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## [Surgery of the Foot & Ankle](#)



[he disease will have pain and/or swelling affecting the feet  
:omplications will lead to them needing surgery.](#)

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## [Ankle Fusion – A Patient’s Perspective](#)

[A patient’s experience with ankle fusion surgery.](#)

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## [Elbow Surgery](#)

[A total elbow replacement is predominantly a procedure which is carried out in patients with metal and plastic replacement joint to the elbow can add](#)



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## [Knee Replacement Surgery](#)

[Over 100,000 knee replacements are now carried out annually in the UK. As a weight-bearing joint, a lot of strain is put upon the knee, and the effects of this and RA can lead to knee replacement surgery being necessary.](#)

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## [Knee Replacement – A Patient’s Perspective](#)

[NRAS founder and Patient Champion Ailsa Bosworth discusses her personal experiences with knee replacement.](#)

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## Foot Surgery

For most, foot orthotics, medication and good footwear can be enough to manage foot health in RA, but in some cases, surgery may be required, whether it's the removal of painful bunions or more extensive corrective joint surgery.

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