

Planning ahead for surgery recovery

By: Jillian Banfield

I want to know what to expect so that I can plan. Planning and preparing make things easier for me. A lifetime of living in a disabled body has taught me that I must do research about everything in advance, such as figuring out whether an event or venue is accessible for me.

When I had my first foot surgery in 2013, I didn't receive much information about what to expect, other than how long I'd be in a cast and how long my overall recovery was expected to take. There were no helpful tips about mobility aids or ways I could set up my living arrangements, other than sleeping on the main floor of the house. And I didn't know enough to ask for more suggestions or even turn to a search engine for ideas about what I could do. I was also moving home after a decade away at university so that I could be with a supportive family during my recovery. So, I didn't have ultimate control over my living space and I arrived back in my hometown only 11 days before my surgery.

Consequently, my recovery period was challenging. I didn't have the right mobility aid for me as crutches are too hard on my hand, wrist, and elbow. I made no other significant adjustments to my living space.

When it was time for another surgery (total ankle replacement) in 2023, I knew I had to do far more planning and preparation for it. Again, I was provided little information beyond the details of what to expect for my recovery. At least the pamphlet I received advocated for getting a knee scooter – an absolute miracle for me, given how painful it is to use crutches. The rest of the preparation, though, I figured out on my own. A mixture of my past experience, a lot of searching the Internet, talking to my trusted massage therapist, and even giving into algorithmic purchasing suggestions, were how I cobbled together a plan for all the things I might need to support my recovery.

My preparation paid off, so I wanted to share what I did in case it would help others who are preparing for surgery or even looking for types of aids that might help with living day-to-day in a disabled body. My post about all of these details is here: <https://hfx.bike/jillian/posts/preparing-for-ankle-surgery-recovery/>