

Argus Orthopaedic Zone

The Orthopaedic Surgery 1/3 Rule

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

There is a banner on the home page of my office website www.orthopodsurgeon.com that states "An educated patient is our best result". What I'm trying to do in these articles in the Shepherd Argus is to make our readers the most knowledgeable group anywhere regarding Orthopaedic and musculoskeletal topics.

I refer to things occasionally as a class because that's how I think about what we are doing together. The good news is there are no quizzes or tests (because I know you will remember everything!)

The bad news is that there is no Summer vacation or holiday breaks (not a pun) in the course.

Now the 1/3 Rule

The rule applies to patients who have Orthopaedic Surgery. It is my own rule, which I discovered through my experience, but I don't claim it to be an original idea. Let me explain.

I like to divide recovery after the Orthopaedic Surgery I do into thirds.

The initial 1/3 of the person's recovery is begun at the time of the surgery. Each case is unique and has to be dealt with individually, but if I feel that I was able to do in surgery what I had hoped and planned to do we are off to a good start. I like to think of this as 1/3 of the patient's recovery. I find that most patients and families think 95 - 100% of it is the surgery. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

The middle 1/3 is what the patient needs to do at our direction to get better. It has to do with following directions faithfully about certain do's and don'ts. Personal exercise at home and occasionally physical therapy are a big part of the do's. A compliant patient is a joy!

The last 1/3 is nature's ultimate healing that neither the patient nor I have any control over. I have explained often that what I do is a

lot like gardening. You can plow, plant, fertilize, water, weed etc., but you can't make it grow (heal). Nature does that.

Usually things heal but not always. That's why you can't guarantee any surgical treatment.

We help, patient cooperates, nature heals.

This last 1/3 has everything to do with the quality of the patient's bone and tissue that we have to work with. Brittle bone or very damaged tissues make it extremely hard to get an adequate repair. Healing can also be very slow and incomplete in some cases.

It is up to me to explain to the patient and family how things went and what kind of bone and tissues we had to work with.

From this I hope you see things a bit more clearly about how healing does occur.

Much more information is available by logging onto our office teaching website www.orthopodsurgeon.com. The website, which can lead you into Your Orthopaedic Connection has tons of great information.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush