

# Orthopedics

Outfitted with the latest technologies and three highly respected surgeons, Dr. Lowell Nickel, Dr. Robert Ching, and Dr. Brian Ching, the department of orthopedics at Oroville Hospital has been ranked among the top 15 percent for treatment of hip fracture repair in the nation.

When a patient breaks a hip, often he or she has other medical problems that need to be taken care of before having surgery. Once the patients are stabilized medically, they can have their hip repaired. Post-operatively, hospitalists monitor patients' progress until they are ready for rehab. It's a simple system that works really well.

"Even in older people that have total joint procedures, you can see improvement and that is really gratifying," says Dr. Brian Ching.

Arthroscopic surgery – a simple, minimally invasive procedure, often used to remove fragmented or shredded material from a joint – is one of the most common treatments. Arthroscopic surgery is commonly applied to sports injuries of the shoulder, which is particularly susceptible to rotator cuff damage, and the knees, perhaps the most vulnerable joint in the body. Fortunately, for young people with these injuries, full recovery is the norm.

Bone injuries, in fact, usually get better and many do not require surgery. "The number of people that require surgery is a small minority; most of the people we see receive treatment that is non-surgical, whether it's prescribing medication for arthritis, giving a cortisone shot, or sending them to physical therapy," says Dr. Robert Ching.

Patients can treat themselves and manage their own bone health before or after injuries. Doing so is, literally, as easy as taking a walk. "Bones are like muscles," Dr. Nickel says. "If you don't use them they get weak. They'll lose minerals like calcium and phosphorous, and become what people call 'brittle bones'." Such avoidable scenarios unfortunately aren't uncommon and can lead to breaks and shattered bones.

"One of the basic reasons that makes orthopedics attractive is that you usually see rapid results in

improvement," says Dr. Nickel. "Whether they've broken a bone and you've fixed it, or if they have severe arthritis and you give them a joint that

**"Bones are like muscles, if you don't use them they get weak."**

doesn't hurt anymore so that they can get up and get around, it's extremely satisfying."

He adds with a wink, "It's medical carpentry."



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