

DOUG - MY SHOULDER REPLACEMENT STORY

I'm a 52 year old very active male. On January 29th, 2018 I had my right shoulder replaced. Some 10 years earlier I started to get dull pains in the front of my right shoulder but because I was and continue to be an active personal trainer and competitive athlete taking extended time off to rest my shoulder was nearly impossible, so I did like so many others have done, I ignored it and hoped it would go away.

About three years after the pain first started it steadily increased. I consulted with a physical therapist who warned me of not only the consequences of continuing to ignore pain but also the consequences of not changing the repetitive chain reactive forces that were causing the pain.

Another 2-3 years went by and the pain had decreased but range of motion was now severely limited, it was as if I had destroyed the nerves and pain pathways and now the shoulder was starting to freeze up. As a side note this was happening on my left shoulder as well but not nearly as bad as the right.

This same (very smart) physical therapist suggested that my untreated back problems as a teenager hiked my right hip and consequently down the chain affected my every foot strike which in turn affected how my spine rotated (or lack of) and caused my left humerus to over rotate and abraise the cuff, and this happened millions of times every step running many marathons. Note: untreated dysfunction and/or asymmetry will in fact if your overly active leak out of some joint often above or below the location of injury.

Fast forward to summer of 2017 where my motion was so severely limited that people started to notice even when doing the most basic things.

I vigorously and diligently adhered to over 8 months of intense physical therapy, hot yoga, home stretching and even altered my diet to consume a primarily anti-inflammatory diet to help the joint heal and I hoped then to then un-freeze. It never happened so I scheduled full replacement. (there is an additional side story as to how I picked my surgeon and the run around other surgeons tried to sell in regards to partial replacement, stem cells, etc..)

Ultimately, I picked a great surgeon. When I woke from the surgery the morning on January 30th he told me he did not need to perform a reverse replacement and that the anatomical surgery went well. I was very relieved.

The next morning my girlfriend drove us home four hours north where I would begin phase one of my recovery. (there is another whole story here in regards to how I prepared my space for recovery and some funny and helpful stories)

At my three week follow up the surgeon showed me the x-ray and said things were proceeding great. I had a nerve block and besides the day I pull the block needle out which gave me a little pain because of all the medical tape pulling hair out, I never felt pain over a 2 out of 10 and I used very little pain medication and never iced. I felt so good at the three-week mark that I drive directly to Florida 14.5 hours to recover on the beach versus in the cold back in Northern Michigan in the US. I rented a condo for three weeks with a hot tub and did 10 times more daily therapy than they recommended. Much of it I did in the hot tub, pool and

ocean as a way to unload the shoulder joint and allow for much less eccentric motion to avoid overuse pain.

Skipping ahead seven months to today I am way beyond where I ever expected. The surgeons warned me that It might be a year until I can do a pushup if ever again and I did 35 straight yesterday. In fact, I've been back out competitively mountain biking and throwing a football without hardly a thought. I still have about 20 degrees to gain in motion and some strength deficits but I'm fully confident I will make a 100% recovery.

As a result, I find myself now consulting with others who have recently or are planning shoulder replacement surgery.