

SUE – MY UPDATE

18 months post-surgery and this summer I feel I have my life back. I'm 65, female, and following a silly trip and breakages 13 years before I suffered from avascular necrosis of the humeral head, which in turn led to arthritis. Several treatments tried, but eventually a full shoulder replacement was the only option. The op itself became complicated due to the sheer lack of mobility and tightness in my shoulder. The surgeon really struggled to place the socket and was really worried about nerve damage. Fortunately, his fears were unfounded.

This summer, at last, I am totally pain free in my shoulder. I have some restriction in mobility, but nothing compared to pre-op. I can garden again, muck out my horses, etc. I've knocked plaster off and painted walls. The things I struggle with are strength and some hand dexterity, eg opening tight jars, holding anything with my arm extended, etc. I probably should work on this, but for now I'm just enjoying life.

Post op I was very committed to the Physiotherapy but learnt the hard way that I should have listened to my Physio and the pain was telling me to stop. Eventually I gave it up for a month and suddenly everything was so much better. Maybe it just needed more time to heal. I did do shoulder strengthening exercises at the gym pre-op, but don't know if that helped or made it worse. I was very lucky that my husband readily took over all my house and animal care duties, allowing me unrestricted recovery time. I think with being so restricted for so long I have already adapted how I do things. I can use my repaired arm to put cups away in cupboards, but I don't as I've just got into the habit of using my good arm for most things. I'm still quite protective of my shoulder.

At my one year check my surgeon was amazed at how much mobility I had and that I was pain free. It's honestly been life changing for me. Being in pain really drags you down mentally and you forget what it's like to not feel it. Big thanks to Michelle and everyone else who wrote blogs. It really helped me get things right and not try to do anything too soon.