

Restoring your independence

You don't need to put up with hip problems and pain, an artificial replacement performed by a specialist surgeon can have you back on your feet in no time – and enjoying activities once again

For some, the prospect of a hip replacement brings with it associations of an invasive procedure with a lengthy recovery time and restricted mobility. You'll be pleased to hear that for many this is not the case; surgical techniques have advanced dramatically in recent years, and hip replacements are giving patients of all ages a new lease of life.

To help you learn about hip replacements and dispel some common myths, Mr Nirav Shah, a consultant orthopaedic surgeon at Goring Hall Hospital in Worthing, West Sussex, who specialises in hip and knee surgeries, answers a few of the most frequently asked questions...



MEET THE EXPERT
Mr Nirav Shah is a consultant trauma and orthopaedic surgeon

Mr Shah has a particular interest in conditions affecting the hip and knee, and specialises in the use of ceramic joint replacements, which offer improved longevity. Since qualifying in 1993, he has gained extensive experience in his field. This enables him to offer patients the latest technologies, along with a very high level of expertise.

What does a hip replacement involve?

'Normally carried out under spinal anaesthesia, a hip replacement involves an incision by the side of the hip joint,' says Mr Shah. 'This enables the surgeon to remove the damaged cartilage of hip joint and replace it with an artificial ceramic joint. The whole operation usually takes around 60 minutes to complete.'

How long will it take to recover from the operation?

'Recovery time can take anything from one to six weeks. Every patient is different, and some are back to their normal routine in just a few days.'

'In the majority of cases, my patients resume typical daily activities such as driving and going back to their job within just a few weeks.'



Mr Shah's patient, Ian, skiing in France just months after his hip replacement

'Surgical techniques for hip problems have advanced dramatically in recent years, and hip replacements are giving patients of all ages a new lease of life'

Will an artificial hip prevent me from leading an active lifestyle again?

'No, not at all. Most patients find that in the lead up to their hip replacement, their pain and lack of mobility makes many of their favourite activities and pastimes impossible. So they're often delighted to discover that they can actually take part in more activities following their hip replacement than they could before!'

What should I do if I'm experiencing pain in my hip?

'You should make an appointment to see your local GP,' says Mr Shah. 'Sometimes a problem with the hip can present itself as a dull ache in the groin, buttock, lower part of your thigh, or even around the knee; so it's always advisable to seek a formal diagnosis at the earliest opportunity.'

'Your GP will usually try less invasive solutions before considering a surgical referral. Alternatively, if you have private health insurance, you can contact a specialist orthopaedic surgeon in the first instance and arrange a thorough diagnosis.'



'I HONESTLY HAVEN'T FELT SO FIT AND ENERGETIC FOR YEARS'
Jo, 58, underwent a successful hip replacement in 2013

As a Pilates instructor with a love of dance and trekking, Jo (inset) was dismayed when she began to experience pain in her right hip. Jo tried various measures to manage and alleviate her pain, but they provided little respite.

Eventually she was referred to Mr Nirav Shah, at which point she was in extreme pain and concerned about her livelihood. As other conservative measures had been unsuccessful, Mr Shah recommended arthroscopy – a keyhole surgery – to examine Jo's hip and if possible repair any damage and alleviate pain.

Following this procedure, it was clear that Jo's case required further major surgical intervention and, in April 2013, Jo underwent a hip replacement.

Following an initially difficult recovery, Jo has gone from strength-to-strength and is now more active than ever before.

'Now, almost two years down the line, I cannot express strongly enough how delighted and relieved I am with my levels of physical fitness,' says Jo. 'I honestly haven't felt so fit, energetic and strong for years. I have the ability to demonstrate strength and flexibility in my Pilates classes, attend Yoga sessions, hike for miles and dance for hours. It's amazing and so exciting – I have my life back!'

'I am going trekking in southern India soon, undertaking a Yoga training course, enjoying a contemporary dance course and being a full-on active and fun grandma of two lively girls – I find myself smiling at the sheer joy of it all.'

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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