

Successful Surgery Provides Shoulder Pain Solution

Local swimmer able to get back in the water—in a big way

Kirk H. recently swam from Alcatraz Island to San Francisco. That's 1.5 miles in 40 minutes in the chilly waters of San Francisco Bay. Pretty impressive, but, consider this: He did it less than a year after having had total shoulder replacement surgery at Washington Hospital.

An avid sports enthusiast, Kirk enjoys swimming, biking, running and yoga. But about 10 years ago, he started feeling pain in his left shoulder anytime he engaged in sports – and often even when he wasn't being active. "It wasn't severe, but it was constant, and it definitely prevented me from enjoying the things I like to do," he recalls.

Finding care

Over the years, Kirk met with several health care practitioners to discuss his condition. His pain was attributed to slow deterioration of the cartilage in his shoulder, most likely because of arthritis. "I tried several treatments, including minimally invasive surgery, stretching exercises and others, but nothing really helped," he says. But then a friend recommended he see orthopedic surgeon John Costouros, MD. Shortly thereafter, Kirk's life changed.

"Unlike many physicians I had seen before, Dr. Costouros was very direct, and proposed a specific course of action," Kirk says. After analyzing the results of



Kirk H. and his fellow swimmer and race buddy, prepare for open ocean swim.

imaging and other tests, Dr. Costouros told Kirk that he was a textbook case for shoulder replacement surgery. After reviewing materials and speaking with Dr. Costouros, Kirk accepted his advice.

In July of 2020, he had the procedure. "I had it done at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic," he says, "but everything went smoothly throughout my stay at the Hospital. I had a great experience there. Everyone was very nice—and it was so quiet!"

At Washington Hospital, the Institute for Joint Restoration and Research allows joint replacement patients to be completely separate from other surgical patients. The care teams specialize in working with these patients.

Surgery put his life back to normal

The surgery itself involved removing Kirk's arthritic shoulder joint and replacing it with a state-of-the-art anatomic total shoulder replacement.

Computer navigation was used to enhance precision during surgery, based on a preoperative plan generated using special software and his imaging studies. The replacement shoulder is composed of a stemless metal alloy for the ball and polyethylene for the socket. The entire surgery took less than an hour.

Once Kirk left the Hospital, he had physical therapy treatment for another four months to build up the strength in his shoulder muscles. "The results are outstanding," he comments. "I can do pretty much everything I had done before the problem started almost 10 years ago. I'm completely pain free." Though his full recovery took about a year, he says it was worth the effort because previously his shoulder was functioning far below normal. He now swims once a week and continues with his other sports activities.

What advice does he have for people considering shoulder joint replacement? "Get it done sooner rather than later," says Kirk. "I could have had a fully functioning shoulder much sooner had I pursued this treatment earlier." But most would agree, wait a while before jumping into the Bay for a swim!

Information on Dr. John Costouros and the Washington Hospital's Institute for Joint Restoration and Research can be found at whhs.com/IJRR.

Lung Cancer Screening Program



Studies show that screening is a valuable tool for detecting lung cancer at its earliest and most treatable stages. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force — an independent volunteer panel of national health experts — recommends low-dose CT scans for those at "high risk." Talk with your doctor about whether or not a scan is right for you or someone you love.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Between 55–77 years old
- Asymptomatic (no symptoms of lung cancer)
- Tobacco smoking history of at least 30 pack years.
(Pack years = number of packs per day multiplied by years smoked.)

Example: 2 packs per day for 15 years = 30 pack year history (2 x 15 = 30)
Example: 20 cigarettes a day (1 pack) for 20 years = 20 pack year history (1 x 20 = 20)
Example: 30 cigarettes a day (1.5 pack) for 20 years = 30 pack year history (1.5 x 20 = 30)

- Current smoker or one who has quit smoking within the last 15 years

Once you have received a referral from your physician, call (510) 818-7410 to schedule a low-dose CT scan.

For more information discuss with your physician or to schedule an appointment with a pulmonologist, call (800) 963-7070 for a physician referral.