

# Palo Alto Man Says He is 'Grateful Every Day' for His New Shoulder

## Reverse Shoulder Replacement Surgery Alleviated Chronic Pain

Al Kenrick's shoulder replacement surgery went so well, he wonders if he should have done it sooner. But the slow deterioration of the joint happened over time, so he never realized what he was giving up until the the full use of his shoulder returned.

"I had been living with such restricted motion – I couldn't even wash my own hair – and now I feel unbelievably good," he said. "I am literally grateful every day for the new shoulder. It has added so much to my quality of life. I probably should have done it sooner."

Al underwent reverse total shoulder replacement surgery in August 2022 performed by Dr. John G. Costouros, orthopedic specialist and chief of shoulder surgery at Washington Hospital's Institute for Joint Restoration and Research. He was one of the first surgeons to bring this procedure to the U.S.

Total shoulder replacement surgery and reverse total shoulder replacement surgery both involve replacing the surfaces of the shoulder joint. However, with a reverse shoulder replacement, the ball is placed on the shoulder blade side of the joint, while the socket is on the arm—which is a reversal of normal anatomy. This is necessary sometimes when the rotator cuff is so damaged a standard shoulder replacement wouldn't be as effective.

"Dr. Coutouros considered all the options, and decided the reverse total shoulder replacement would have the best result," Al said. "He was right. My range of motion came back almost immediately."

**Active Life**

Al has always lived an active lifestyle, which has taken a toll on his shoulder. "I had a very active youth," he added. "I fell on my shoulder a lot. I played football and rugby, and fell off my bike."

Al, who is 65, said that as recently as his late 50s, he was still doing triathlons. But about six years ago the pain in his right shoulder became more intense.

"I couldn't swim," he said. "Then it really started to impact my everyday life. I had to lift my right arm with my left arm to shake hands. I couldn't hold the steering wheel with two hands. I couldn't put the dishes away with my right hand. I had to do everything with my left hand."

But he wasn't quite ready to have shoulder surgery. Then in 2021, his knee "just stopped working. I couldn't walk 200 yards. I couldn't even go upstairs," he recalled. He had to do something. In June 2021, he had knee replacement surgery performed by Dr. John T. Dearborn,



Al Kenrick enjoys an active lifestyle—thanks to Washington Hospital's IJRR.

co-medical director of the Institute for Joint Restoration and Research at Washington Hospital.

"I had such a good experience with Dr. Dearborn, I decided to get my shoulder fixed," Al said. "At my one-year checkup, I told Dr. Dearborn my knee was great, but my shoulder still hurt. He recommended Dr. Costouros."

**Easy Recovery**

Al said the recovery from shoulder surgery was much easier than he expected. "My shoulder replacement was a piece of cake," he added. "I was maybe on pain meds for a day. I expected that every time I sat up, my shoulder would hurt, but that wasn't the case. I had surgery at Washington Hospital and went home the same day. I received excellent care and was surprised how easy physical therapy was. Everything went so much better than I thought it would."

Now he is planning a backpacking trip for this summer, something he had to stop doing with his bum shoulder.

"I had no idea how bad it had become because the degradation process was so long and slow," Al explained. "Honestly, it is like getting my life back."

For more information about Washington Hospital's Institute for Joint Restoration and Research, visit [www.whhs.com/IJRR](http://www.whhs.com/IJRR).

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