

# Shoulder Replacement Keeps Sonoma Ecologist Active

“My Only Regret is Not Doing it Sooner”



Back to enjoying the outdoors, Stephen Hansen is grateful for his new shoulder.

In addition to managing the Sonoma wildlife preserve he calls home, 76-year-old Stephen Hansen enjoys swimming, cycling 50 to 70 miles a week, cross-country skiing, and playing singles tennis. He heads an extraordinary family of ecologists that work to protect the earth. He and his wife are retired PhD ecologists; his daughter founded a nonprofit organization focused on climate change adaptation; and his son is an environmental scientist with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. For the past several years, Stephen had to deal with pain and loss of mobility in his deteriorating shoulder. Now recovered from his December 2023 shoulder replacement, he is back doing all the things he loves, and his shoulder is pain free.

Stephen is one of many Northern California people of all ages who come to Washington Hospital's Institute for Joint Restoration and Research (IJRR) for a comprehensive range of world-class shoulder treatments and surgeries performed by leading shoulder specialist and orthopedic surgeon John G. Costouros, MD, FACS, FAAOS.



Dr. Costouros' career has been focused entirely on the shoulder, from educating patients and future doctors, mastering surgical techniques, and developing new technologies. In 2004, he was one of the first surgeons to bring reverse total shoulder replacement to the U.S. Dr. Costouros also performs traditional total shoulder replacement and less invasive stemless replacement. He is board certified and fellowship trained, and treats people of all ages and lifestyles including high school and college athletes, as well as local professionals like 49ers, Warriors and Giants players.

When searching for a shoulder surgeon, Stephen was referred to Dr. Costouros by his physical therapist and another surgeon. “Dr. Costouros' practice works like clockwork. During the consultation, he answered all my questions even before I asked them,” Stephen said. “I also met with his physician assistant, Kevin Saska, who was wonderful. They gave me a comprehensive booklet describing what to do before and after surgery that was really helpful for my wife and me. At appointments we

always got in right away and it only took two weeks to schedule the surgery.”

Depending on the diagnosis, physical therapy can help manage some shoulder problems. Dr. Costouros will occasionally use injections to treat mild cases of rotator cuff disease, frozen shoulder and arthritis. Surgery is discussed when other treatments fail to resolve pain and loss of function.

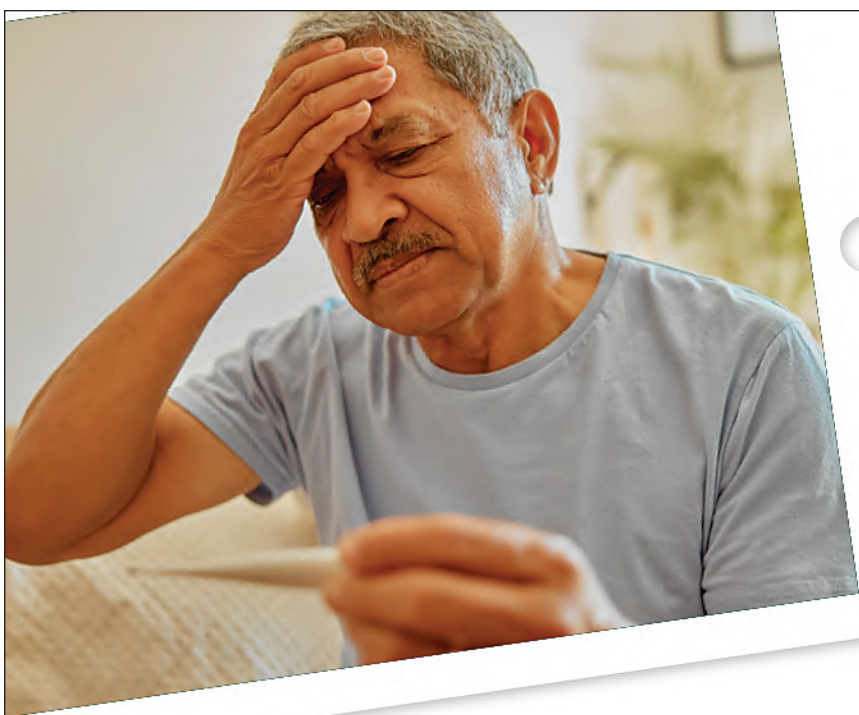
“I had been experiencing shoulder pain and stiffness for about eight years and did physical therapy in lieu of pursuing shoulder replacement surgery,” explained Stephen. “It wasn't improving, but I kept kicking the can down the road because I heard shoulder surgery can come with unintended consequences. As it turned out, that was not the case at all. Thanks to Dr. Costouros and his excellent team—my surgery went smoothly and was relatively painless. Now my new shoulder works as well as the other one. My only regret is not doing it sooner.”

Advancements in surgical techniques have made shoulder replacement less invasive and more bone preserving. Also, anesthesia practices for pain control are improving, allowing patients to go home the same or next day. “I arrived at the Washington Outpatient Surgery Center at 7 a.m. the morning of surgery and left for home at 2 p.m. that day,” recalled Stephen. “I stopped taking the pain medications three days after surgery and did physical therapy twice a week as well as at-home exercises 30 minutes per day. After four months of rehab, I went right back to playing tennis with friends and forest thinning for wildfire control on the preserve. I couldn't be happier with my new shoulder and I would highly recommend Dr. Costouros to others who may be putting off their shoulder replacement surgery.”

To learn more about Dr. Costouros or the Institute for Joint Restoration and Research at Washington Hospital, go to [whhs.com/IJRR](http://whhs.com/IJRR) or scan the QR code below.



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