

Hips are made for walking

Are your hips causing you great pain? Have you given up on the hope of ever doing anything active again? Surgery can change all of that...

After almost six years of suffering and having two hip replacements, Eileen Edwards, 73, was standing alongside the highest mountain lake in the whole of Europe. It had been a long struggle but, thanks to the skills of orthopaedic surgeon, Jonathan Luscombe and encouragement from her son David, Eileen had finally conquered her fears and was enjoying the breathtaking views surrounding Lake Allos in the French Alps.

'It was a very emotional moment for me,' she explains. 'My son kept telling me he was going to take me there, but I never really believed that it would happen.' Eileen, who lives in Bewdley, Worcestershire, began experiencing hip pain and difficulty walking more than six years ago, however a fear of operations kept her away from her doctor for far too long. 'I was just terrified of operations.'

'I stayed away from the doctors and my hips got progressively worse,' she says. 'I was steadily becoming helpless, struggling to get about and I was in constant pain. At the time,

my son was renovating a place in the French Alps, and he kept urging me to have an operation – telling me that he would take me to the house and show me the mountains as soon as I was better. In the end, I booked an appointment with my doctor. He sent me to see Mr Luscombe at BMI Droitwich Spa Hospital, who told me the only way I was going to get active again was by having hip replacements.

'I really wasn't sure, but I decided to go ahead with it and was delighted with the result. My walking has improved dramatically and I am much more mobile than before.'

Highs and lows

David kept his promise and, once Eileen was back on her feet, her son took her to France. Together, they went to the top of some of the region's mountainous 'high-spots'. But it wasn't until she'd had her second hip replacement that former NHS professional Eileen made the trip to Lake Allos. 'Again, I wasn't exactly looking forward to the operation but I went through with it and now I am so glad I did,' she says. 'The lake and the mountains were so beautiful, it was an unforgettable experience.'



A hip replacement can lead to a healthier lifestyle altogether



Mr Luscombe explains that Eileen suffered osteoarthritis in both hips and would have been experiencing a lot of pain before her replacements. He also urges others not to delay seeking medical advice. 'Some people put up with it, saying: "I'm getting old, this is what happens."' However, there is no reason why someone in their sixties, seventies or eighties can't enjoy being pain-free and able to move freely. What you can do after a hip replacement will, of course, depend on your age and your fitness level,' he continues. 'But, whatever age you are, it is almost certain that your quality of life will improve considerably after having an arthritic hip replaced.'

Don't suffer in silence

'Your hip is an ingenious piece of engineering – but no matter how clever the design, the fact is that hips are prone to break down as wear and tear start to take their toll,' adds Mr Luscombe. 'However, there is no need to suffer – surgery is a routine and straightforward procedure and is suitable for patients of all ages. It can free you from pain and restore some of the freedom of movement that you used to take for granted. The operation itself is fairly quick and straightforward, taking just 60-90 minutes. The surgeon makes an incision into the hip, removes the damaged hip joint and replaces it with a new, artificial joint.'

'For the first four to six weeks after the operation, patients will need a walking aid as a means of support,' says Mr Luscombe. 'But, with the help of physiotherapy, you will be amazed at how quickly your movement improves. Indeed, most people can resume normal activities within two or three months,



MEET THE EXPERT

Mr Jonathan Luscombe
MBChB, MRCS,
FRCS (Trauma
& Orthopaedic) is a
Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon.

Hip and Knee specialist, Mr Jonathan Luscombe is an Orthopaedic Surgeon based in Worcestershire with his private practice located at BMI The Droitwich Spa Hospital.

Mr Luscombe performs over 200 joint replacements a year specialising in both primary and revision hip replacements as well as primary knee replacements. He is committed to providing excellent clinical and overall patient care and works in conjunction with other healthcare professionals such as radiographers and physiotherapists to ensure the best outcome for his patients.

During his initial consultations, Mr Luscombe takes time to understand the condition and lifestyle of his patients so that they can openly discuss treatment options that are tailored to the lifestyle of the patient.

although it can take a year before the patient enjoys the full benefit of having a new hip.

'Being able to move freely also enables people to stay fitter longer,' Mr Luscombe adds. 'This is why a hip replacement can lead to a healthier lifestyle altogether.'

Fighting fit

Since her return to fitness, Eileen, who was also looked after by her daughter Karen, has certainly been making the most of things. She now swims three times a week, spends hours working in the garden of her log cabin bungalow in the Worcestershire countryside, and enjoys regular dance exercise classes.

'I can't believe how much the operations have changed my life,' marvels Eileen. 'I would strongly encourage other people with similar problems to get replacements as soon as they possibly can so that they can get back to enjoying their lives to the full.'

'Whatever age you are, your quality of life will improve after having an arthritic hip replaced'



DO YOU HAVE OSTEOARTHRITIS?

This condition can affect a range of joints in the body, and there are a number of causes and symptoms...

Osteoarthritis is a condition that affects the joints, and which causes them to become stiff and painful.

It is the most common type of arthritis in the UK, and most often causes problems in joints which carry weight, such as the feet, knees, hips, and spine. However, it can also affect elbows, shoulders, the small joints of the hands or any other joint.

Osteoarthritis occurs when there is damage in and around the joints that the body can't fully repair. There are several

factors thought to increase your risk of developing the condition, these include:

- Joint injury
- Secondary arthritis
- Age
- Family history
- Obesity

The main symptoms of osteoarthritis are pain and stiffness in your joints. Other symptoms include joints appearing slightly larger or more 'knobbly' than usual; a grating or crackling sound or sensation in your joints; limited range of movement in your joints; weakness and muscle wasting. To find out more about this condition, visit www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Osteoarthritis

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you are considering hip replacement surgery, call **01905 793333** to arrange an appointment with Mr Luscombe. Or, visit bmihealthcare.co.uk/droitwich



The Droitwich Spa Hospital