

Surfer Gives Waves of Gratitude to Surgeon after Hip Replacement

By Michelle Brubaker | January 10, 2013

Glen Horn's passion is surfing, but last year he wasn't sure he would ever ride the waves again after discovering he needed a total hip replacement.

It was during a surf trip to Mexico that Horn first realized something was wrong. He thought he pulled a groin muscle.

"I continued to stretch, but the pain never went away. I started to think there wasn't an answer to the problem I was having, and I could hardly move. I really wanted to surf, but could only ride the board on my stomach. I knew I had to see a doctor because something was very wrong," said Horn.

Through a friend's recommendation, Horn made an appointment with Scott Ball, MD, orthopedic surgeon at UC San Diego Health.

"Dr. Ball had great bedside manner and made me feel so comfortable. He made me feel like I could talk to him for hours, which built up my confidence," said Horn.

The 63-year-old surfer had tried non-surgical methods, including medications, but none were successful.

"By the time Glen came to see me, his right hip was deteriorated, arthritic and interfering with his quality of life," said Ball. "Hip replacement surgery was the best option for him."

"I was mentally and physically ready for surgery," said Horn. "I was ready to live again."

Ball performed a mini-posterior hip replacement, which allows for direct, minimally invasive access to the hip joint and thigh bone (femur) leading to fast recovery, greater stability and a reduced risk of dislocation compared to traditional hip replacement techniques. The incision is approximately three to six inches in length and is made along the side of the hip curving backward, placing the scar in a less visible area.

"The vast majority of patients do very well after this type of hip replacement and can resume a very active lifestyle," said Ball. "Glen recovered smoothly and made daily improvements in mobility, strength and activity level. He did not try to push it too hard," said Ball.

Glen Horn surfing in Baja.

Horn admits the recovery process had periods of frustration that tested his patience.

"I'm a healthy, active person and never thought I would be in this position," said Horn. "All I wanted to do was get back in the water."

Horn walked with a cane or a crutch for just a few weeks and was back on his surf board three months after his hip replacement.

Ball says with the all of the evidence of the health and mental benefits of regular exercise, it is his goal to help his patients resume activity after joint replacement surgery.

"Today's implant materials are proving to be wear-resistant and tolerate the demands patients place on them," said Ball.

Horn emphasizes the importance of a patient's motivation when recovering from a joint replacement surgery.

"My recovery consisted of a lot of hard work and positive thoughts. I kept visualizing my hip healing and living until I am 120 years old," said Horn. "My suggestion to other hip replacement patients is to be strict about the rehabilitation process. It's a lifetime commitment, not just a few weeks of work."

Horn also believes his experience was so successful because of the surgeon he chose.

"Your surgeon is the heart and soul of the procedure. I appreciate everything Dr. Ball has done for me. He's a true artist at joint replacement surgery, and I will forever take care of his work," said

Horn.

To learn more about joint replacement surgery at UC San Diego Health, please
<http://jointcenter.ucsd.edu>

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