

My right shoulder, which is my dominant arm, had troubled me for many years. I am now 74 year old and had visited my doctor on many occasions since the age of 45-50, resulting in a number of steroid injections, which relieved the pain for a short duration.

I have always led a very active life. Gardening being a particular joy to me. Walking, yoga and cooking, together with caring for my home being an important part of my life. These activities were proving difficult to pursue with the increased pain to my shoulder and arm.. Eventually, I was only able to raise my right arm by supporting it with my left. I needed both hands to fill a kettle. It was impossible to tend my garden. Pruning roses etc. was certainly out.

About 5 years ago I went to a Consultant, hoping he could help me. After demonstrating my range of movements and MRI scan, I was told there was nothing that he could do to help me, as the it showed the classic hallmarks of an enormous and irreparable tear of the rotator cuff. However, he suggested a Rotator Cuff Repair to the left shoulder which was showing signs of wear due mainly to the amount of work it had been put through by supporting my bad shoulder.

I had my Rotator Cuff Repair 4 years ago. After the op. my painful shoulder had to stand in for the other one, whilst it was recovering from surgery. This also added more strain and pain.. The deterioration was very marked and it was becoming very difficult to cope. Life was misery. Yoga classes, gardening were abandoned and everyday activities beome increasingly difficult.

I visited my Doctor after being told of the Reading Shoulder Unit by a close friend. My Doctor agreed to write to Mr Levy, after telling me that if anyone could help me, it would be him.

My first visit to Mr Levy was one filled with apprehension, together with high hopes. After examination- tasting my range of movements and the subsequent scan, he said 'yes' he could help me. What a day! Mr Levy explained what the operation would entail. Showed me illustrations of the prosthesis he had designed, answered all my questions and put me at ease about the whole procedure.

I had my operation on the 4Th January, 2007 at the Shoulder Unit of the Capio Reading Hospital. Looking back, it is now January, 2008, trying to imagine how I felt after the operation, really is a test of my memory. I was visited by the anaesthetist prior to the op.to talk the procedure over and explain that I would not be allowed to be in any pain. I went to the operating theatre feeling strangely excited. All the medical staff were very professional, but also very caring. I felt in very good hands. I expected to feel pretty awful when the anaesthetic wore off and I did, but staff were there to administer my every need. I was not in any pain. Pain was not allowed to be felt, thank goodness. A physiotherapist was soon giving me exercises and was practising movements as advised. I had been told by a doctor friend in America, that recovering from this operation was a doddle. The most important part would be the recuperation, when the patient was expected to regularly carry out the exercises given them by the physiotherapist. Theses were vital to the success of and recovery of this wonderful operation.

Mr Levy visited me regularly and explained to me that he had had to stretch my deltoid muscle and I now had one arm slightly longer than the other. I could cope with that. He was, and still is full of encouragement. I saw the physiotherapist every day and was soon practising my exercises. Of course they were uncomfortable at first, but I had been given a new shoulder, the rotation of which needed to be used in the way I was being advised.

On leaving the hospital, I was nervous at not having the staff at my side, but that feeling soon passed and my confidence started to return. Mr Levy had said to phone him should I feel concerned at all. I regularly did my exercises. Hourly at first, then as advised by the physiotherapist. I was at times over enthusiastic, causing myself unnecessary discomfort. I phoned Mr Levy for assurance. He told me 'to ease off - do not do through pain. I was soon off pain killers and starting to feel very optimistic about my new shoulder. The recovery has been gradual. My regular visits to Mr Levy giving my great encouragement.

I can now lift my arm unaided and stretch upwards and outwards without any degree of pain. I do my gardening, shampoo and blow-dry my hair, use my computer and enjoy life so much more than 13 months ago.

I do still have some discomfort in my muscles and scapula. I hope this will lessen eventually.

I have worked hard on my recovery, but I have to thank Mr Levy and his team for giving me this new shoulder. He seems very pleased with my progress. The satisfaction he must feel when all his hard work and dedication brings forth such rewards and appreciation.

Thank you so very much to Mr Levy and all the staff at the Reading Shoulder Unit.

Yours sincerely,

Doreen Sanders