

# Living Pain Free: One Man's Success Story

...by Sonya Carmichael Jones

**W**hen you've got a zest for life, you tend to pay attention to aging wisely and staying healthy.

So, what do you do when routine, every-day activities like walking to your favorite neighborhood coffee shop, stooping to get the morning paper, or climbing stairs in your home become impossible? And what if you've already tried to improve your condition with conventional treatments, such as anti-inflammatory medications, joint lubricants, or walking aides?

Living with chronic pain is hard. And Donald Reno knows exactly how hard it can be. "I could not bend. It was painful to walk, shop and climb stairs. I could not accomplish simple activities without severe pain. Every walking movement became an ordeal and every activity was perceived according to walking distance," says Don.

## When asked how his life is better after surgery and rehab, Don says, "Nothing short of miraculous!"

That was the quality of life this active 65 year old experienced two years prior to having bilateral knee replacement, a surgery in which damaged and painful areas of cartilage and bone are removed and replaced with prosthetic components made of metal, polyethylene plastic and ceramic materials.

Each year hundreds of thousands of strong and vital adults lose their ability to perform normal activities. The most common culprit is arthritis—osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and traumatic arthritis. But joint injuries caused by falls or over-exertion when playing sports can also cause severe pain and disability. In Donald Reno's case, he underwent nine previous knee operations prior to having total knee replacement in both knees. When he came to Valley Medical Center, the deterioration of cartilage in



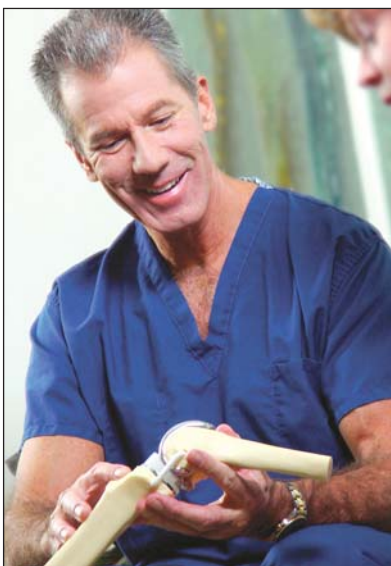
Before bilateral knee replacement, Don Reno could not walk to the local coffee shop or climb stairs. Now he says "I have no limitations. I'm back to regular walking with no pain or discomfort. I can do full squats!"

his knees was so severe they were literally rubbing bone to bone.

For most people, joint replacement surgery is a measure of last resort. The majority of patients who undergo joint replacement surgery, usually for the knee or hip, are in their 60's and have experienced continuous, debilitating pain for six months or longer. They've typically exhausted other treatments, and yearn to get back to enjoying life.

According to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, approximately 435,000 adults in the United States have a hip or knee replaced each year. The national success rate is solid, as more than 90 percent of joint replacement patients experience a full recovery.

"I have always been active," says Don, noting his regular exercise regimen consisted of running an average of 35 miles per week, riding several miles on a stationary bike and a gym workout. "So, when I couldn't even walk across the street to get a cup of coffee, I couldn't tolerate my condition any longer."



Dr. William Barrett is the Medical Director of The Joint Center at Valley Medical Center

Medical Center. Don contacted the patient to find out more, then made up his mind. "I just felt good about it," Don says. "You hear so many horror stories about outcomes, so the

most important part is making sure you find a competent surgeon. I felt like I had."

The Joint Center at Valley Medical Center is the premier treatment facility in the Pacific Northwest exclusively dedicated to treating bones and joints. It's also known throughout the region for being a leader in adopting the latest advanced technology. The Center's Medical Director, Dr. William

Barrett is one of the first surgeons to use computer assisted surgery. He is supported by a team of experienced and highly acclaimed surgeons, nurses, physical therapists, and other clinicians who specialize in treating virtually every bone and joint in the body.

With the decision to have surgery behind him, Don's next step was to prepare for the actual surgical process. The joint replacement seminars he attended at Valley Medical Center relieved the anxiety he had about the surgery as

well as any post-operative care. Don strongly recommends that anyone considering joint replacement conduct lots of independent research and attend seminars where they can ask questions and get face-time with joint specialists. The more you learn, the greater your peace of mind. Seminars are free and held weekly at Valley Medical Center. Also, when evaluating a program, find out how many joint replacement surgeries the hospital has performed and how long its surgeons have been performing them.

Finally, a patient must be prepared to undergo extensive rehabilitation and physical therapy. "You have to pursue physical therapy with passion", Don says. He recalled that twice a week for six weeks, he stuck it out. "It was tough. I did exercises religiously at home in addition to the physical therapy at Valley Medical Center." Recovery times vary from patient to patient because factors like the patient's overall physical condition prior to surgery, the patient's motivational level about physical therapy, and the extent or type of surgery each has had can all impact the outcome.

When asked how his life is better after surgery and rehab, Don says, "Nothing short of miraculous! I have no limitations. I'm back to regular walking with no pain or discomfort. I can do full squats! Valley Medical Center is a good outfit."

For more information on the Joint Center at Valley Medical Center visit [www.valleymed.org](http://www.valleymed.org) and Dr. Barrett's Blog at [www.drwilliambarrett.com](http://www.drwilliambarrett.com). Valley Medical Center offers free joint replacement informational seminars every Monday at 11am-12pm. For more information call 425-656-INFO (4636). ❖

Additional joint replacement resources can be found at these links:

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- American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons [www.aaos.org](http://www.aaos.org)
- Arthritis Pain Foundation [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)
- American Pain Foundation [www.painfoundation.org](http://www.painfoundation.org)
- National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases [www.niams.nih.gov](http://www.niams.nih.gov)

This story exploring one man's experience with bilateral knee replacement is brought to you by Valley Medical Center, ranked best (#1) in Seattle for Joint Replacement Surgery.



Valley Medical Center

Remarkable things happen here.



THE JOINT CENTER

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