

Arthritis Success Story

Nelson woman Maureen McKain is living proof that surgical intervention, natural remedies and a positive outlook blend well together. The yoga teacher, former dancer and coordinator of Nelson's International Health and Lifestyle Festival of Opportunities underwent a right hip replacement a year ago and is back teaching yoga and almost able to touch her head with her right foot, showing the degree of flexibility she has been able to regain.

She says a combination of natural homeopathic remedies and the power of positive thought have got her to where she is today and encourages anyone facing a hip replacement not only to go ahead with the operation, but also to consider alternative remedies.

Maureen is in her early 60s and has been dancing since she was a little girl. She began teaching yoga 25 years ago. Fit, lithe and eternally optimistic, Maureen had suffered no major illness, broken no bones and had no surgery prior to the hip replacement. She says she felt in peak physical condition until she was in a creative dance class a couple of years ago. 'I must have thought I was still young and I went down to do the splits and I felt something in my groin crack and I went down in pain. I recovered in a few days, but I think that plus a fall was probably the onset of arthritis.'



**Maureen McKain—
demonstrating her successful
hip replacement!**

While not owning up to pain, instead referring to it as discomfort and restriction, Maureen says she gradually became more impaired in her movement. There were days when I couldn't walk and I had to crawl up the steps to the clothes line. Finally friends pushed her to see a specialist and x-rays revealed osteo-arthritis in both hips, both knees and lower back, although Maureen wasn't suffering pain in all areas. The right hip had deteriorated to such a state, bone on bone that it was beyond help.

But even though she agreed to a hip replacement, Maureen says she continued hoping it wouldn't happen. Using natural remedies she hoped to help the other arthritis affected parts of her body, with the help of her neighbour, homeopath Karin Funk.

Maureen says she continued to teach yoga, although she says in her determination not to let her condition get the better of her, she possibly put strain on her body. "I was in denial right up to the night before the operation," she says. "I went walking along the beach with a girlfriend and I was using my beautiful carved walking stick, which has paua and greenstone in it. I said to my girlfriend, look, I'm walking fine, aren't I? I don't need the operation.' And she said, look, this is what you look like', and she demonstrated my gait."

Maureen had the hip replacement at the end of July last year and has been home a week when she suffered a major setback. Coming up the hall her right leg "shot out behind her." Told she had suffered a fracture, Maureen spent another week in hospital and was told it would take two years to make a full recovery. Determined to do as much for herself as possible, Maureen returned home and continued taking a range of natural remedies, including homeopathic remedy *Symphytum* for mending bones, Glucosamine with Chondroitin to help build cartilage, MSM, a natural anti-inflammatory and painkiller, and a supplement called Life Force Body Balance and Osteopro Care.

A year later, she has full movement in her right leg. "It's great," she says. "I'm doing yoga better than I had done in the two years before the operation and I'm back dancing." She has no pain in her other arthritic joints, but recognises that the condition could at any time reactivate and is prepared to begin taking the homeopathic and natural remedies again in an attempt to prevent any further surgery. Maureen urges others with osteoarthritis to stay as active as possible. "Don't ever give up. Keep up your activity as much as you can and don't give in to the pain. One of the things I did on my bad days before the operation was to get into bed and rest. Rests when the pain gets severe, otherwise, keep physically active."

She is a firm advocate of the benefits of undergoing a hip replacement and wouldn't hesitate to recommend the procedure. "I mean, just look at me. I can almost get my right foot up on my head again. It's great." Such is her success story, Maureen would like to offer Yoga seminars all over New Zealand to inspire arthritis sufferers and for people who have had hip replacements. "I want to be an inspiration to others in my position. That's my mission."

Maureen has been a member of the IYTA for over 15 years. In this time Maureen has tutored the TTC for 6 years, was President for Waikato Branch for 3 years and was also convener for the South Island IYTA Convention in Nelson 6 years ago.

For more information or to see how you can help, visit
<http://www.arthritis.org.nz/>