

Patient Story

A New Lease on Life One Patient's Recovery from Osteoarthritis of the Knee

Keep in mind that your results may differ from those shown in this section. Your results will depend upon your personal circumstances. Please discuss your situation with your doctor if you are thinking about bone or joint surgery.

As an actress living in New York City, Barbara knows the importance of a good performance. But when the 52 year-old began experiencing pain and stiffness in her knees about six years ago, Barbara found it more difficult with each audition to hide the fact that she was suffering. Barbara is one of 21 million people in the United States who lives with the degenerative joint disease known as osteoarthritis. For those who suffer from osteoarthritis of the knee, the symptoms include severe discomfort, debilitating pain, stiffness, and loss of mobility.

As Barbara's symptoms worsened, the thought of having to give up her job playing the role of Mother Goose and reading stories to children at the FAO Schwarz store in New York City, helped her to realize that she needed to seek treatment for her condition.

As osteoarthritis progresses, it wears down the knee cartilage that acts like a cushion, resulting in the bones rubbing against each other. The active life that Barbara once led was beginning to slip away. She had to stop exercising because she couldn't get through her workout routine without experiencing intense agony. She limped through auditions and worried that her growing disability would keep her from getting parts. She worried that she would have to give up attending the theater because the seats were suddenly too small and cramped. The last time she had gone, she was nearly in tears from the pain by intermission.

Over time, the daily activities Barbara once took for granted such as climbing stairs, kneeling in church and even crossing her legs, became agonizing chores. The intense ache in her knees seemed to never leave: it filled her last thought before she went to bed and her first thought when she woke up.



"I would get up in the morning feeling as if I hadn't slept all night because the pain would constantly wake me up," Barbara said. "I just felt fatigued all the time."

During the course of her ordeal, Barbara sought treatment from her primary care physician, who recommended her to Dr. Giles R. Scuderi, an orthopaedic surgeon at New York's Insall Scott Kelly Institute. After trying to ease Barbara's condition with a series of injections, both doctor and patient agreed that surgical replacement of both knees was the best option.

Dr. Scuderi concluded that Barbara was an ideal candidate for the NexGen® Complete Knee Solution LPS-Flex Fixed Bearing Knee because of the range of motion in her knees and her desire to continue her active lifestyle. This new prosthetic knee supports a higher range of motion for patients undergoing a total knee replacement. It is the first knee specifically designed to safely accommodate deep flexion of up to 155 degrees.

For patients with the ability and desire to perform high flexion activities, such additional flexibility allows them to partake more confidently in their everyday activities, from climbing stairs, to sitting in and standing up from a chair, to kneeling in a garden or in church.

"Patients today are expecting to resume their active lifestyle after a total knee replacement," explained Dr. Scuderi. "With early diagnosis and good preoperative flexibility, the Flex Fixed Knee is designed to accommodate resumption of many of the physical activities they have come to enjoy, which is an important part of maintaining their desired quality of life."

Barbara knew a commitment to physical therapy and daily knee exercises after surgery would help her regain her strength and full range of motion. "I worked hard at my rehabilitation," said Barbara. "The thought of being able to resume my exercise routine and kneel down to the children's level, encouraged me everyday."

Barbara says the quality is indeed back in her life. "The Flex Fixed Knee has given me a new lease on life," she said. "I'm as active and mobile as I want to be. And it's terrific."

"Of course, not all patients can expect results like Barbara's," said Dr. Scuderi. "Interested patients need to visit with their doctor to see if this type of prosthesis is an appropriate match for their lifestyles and physical abilities. It's important to remember that this knee doesn't create range of motion that the patient didn't have before – it accommodates motion of which the patient is capable."

