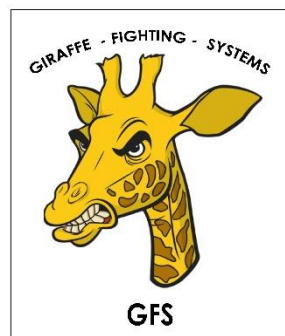




**Dealing with injuries / illnesses**

**by Mark 'Giraffe' Day**

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## **Prologue**

This 'novella' was inspired by a discussion I had with Mark Human (Chief Instructor of Multi-Dimensional Warriors - MDW) in October 2019 at the MDW Thailand camp in Chiang Rai. Mark mentioned that he had been working on a program to assist military, security, and civilian personnel with injury rehabilitation, specifically tailored towards combatives training.

The key takeaway I took from the conversation was around Mark's messaging with training around injuries and not through them. I wish I had known this invaluable mantra 10 plus years ago. This was a harsh lesson that I like many others have had to deal with through my own personal injury troubles that eventually led me to having bilateral hip replacements.

I agreed with Mark that I would write down my own experiences with the painful journey of having severe arthritis in both hips. So, I have penned this story to possibly assist others who maybe experiencing similar troubles with personal injuries / illnesses while still trying to remain active, either on duty or just training to keep up their overall fitness and combative skills. Take and leave what you want from this story. If you are pressed for time then feel free to skip to the end for my own personal top 10 tips.

At the time of writing this I am recovering well after my 2<sup>nd</sup> hip resurfacing operation. I hope one day my little girl (Luna) who has just turned 1 years old will one day read this short story and be proud of her Dad.

## **Pushing the Limits**

I remember my trip to South Africa in October 2016 very clearly. I attended the MDW ZA camp in Joburg and other MDW seminars in Capetown. As usual the training conducted by Mark Human was first class. It was my 3<sup>rd</sup> time training MDW in South Africa and if it wasn't for my own personal commitments on the home front, I would have loved to live and train over there for a long time!

On our trip we trained at a hardcore boxing gym called 'Rocky's Boxing Gym' in Joburg which was where MDW Instructor Clint Oosthuizen's boxed and conducted his own MDW classes. The training was hard and I loved it. While we stayed in Capetown Mark Human also introduced me to his own 'Battlebox' system which was designed to help weapon-based students develop their empty hand fighting skills and at the same time transfer these skills seamlessly with other weapons such as Mark's infamous 'Cohort' (essentially a double-edged punch dagger).

The new boxing training fuelled a passion which I wanted to explore further when I returned to Oz. I'd never really learned and trained the craft of boxing on its own. So, I hit up a few boxing gyms when I got back and found one that suited what I needed which was a tough fighter's gym that actually taught the craft of boxing as opposed to just fitness boxing. Not before too long in 2017 I was sparring a few times a week and at the same time I was wrestling with an Uzbekistani ex-Olympian wrestling coach, doing Brazilian jiu-jitsu, teaching MDW once a week and doing strength and conditioning training.

Later that year I fought three times in amateur boxing. One time in an exhibition bout and twice in the Victorian Masters division heavyweight division. I disappointingly lost my first fight on points and later came back to beat the same opponent on points and win the state title for my division. At the time I was 38 and I felt like I was the most fight fit and strongest I had ever been. I felt like I was at my physical peak.

Boxing is a tough emotional roller coaster sport and with it comes some harsh character-building lessons. There were times when I didn't want to train or turn up as I knew I would probably get matched up with better opponents who would most likely hurt or get the better of me but I never once shirked from any training or sparring despite what I was feeling. Each time I did this I felt that I got that little bit stronger mentally.

Interestingly enough the only real difference between winning and losing against the same opponent was my mental attitude. I went from a more cautious defensive mindset in the 1<sup>st</sup> fight to a more aggressive and attacking mindset in the 2<sup>nd</sup> fight and reaped the rewards. Ironically, I've been through a similar journey with MDW and other styles of Martial Arts in the past. Having the right mindset in all aspects of your life is paramount.

### **The Gradual Decline**

2018 was a similar year training wise. More hard training in boxing, wrestling, jiu-jitsu, and MDW however when I look back now, I probably started to feel that I was slightly declining physically. At the time I was getting a lot of what I thought was muscle soreness but I kept ploughing on regardless. I thought that with more stretching, foam rolling, muscle release work etc that I would be right. This certainly did help me get by but it only seemed to provide short term relief.

I remember in early 2019 going for a 6km run on my usual route around my neighbourhood. I hadn't been on a run for a while and wasn't expecting a fantastic time but when I look back something clearly wasn't right and was holding me back. I felt like I couldn't run properly. I knew I was unfit when it came to running. However, I pulled up extremely sore and it was a kind of soreness that I had never felt before. Again, in my naivety I put it down to muscle soreness and getting older and I just sucked it up and kept training hard. Additionally, my range of hip motion was starting to diminish. I could barely kick above waist level and quickly stopped doing any high kicks to prevent further soreness. I couldn't really do any effective wrestling / jiu-jitsu takedowns with a proper penetration step and certainly not at a competitive level so I stopped wrestling. But I stupidly just soldiered on and kept training and kept pulling up sore. The tell-tale signs were there but I was blinded by my ego / stubbornness and not wanting to be 'soft'.

Ironically, after a successful duck hunting trip I was hospitalised with septic bursitis in my elbow. This actually gave my body a reprieve as I was forced to take a month off training after a couple of relapses and having to prolong my course of antibiotics (Note - jabs in the butt suck!). On a side note, I later found out that septic bursitis is a serious medical condition which people have died from when left untreated or not quickly attended to. Probably explains why the medical staff were taking it a lot more seriously than me!

However, I managed to recover in time to get myself on a plane to participate in two Kali (Filipino Martial Arts) training camps in the Philippines. For the first time in my life, I found myself getting sore from standing up for prolonged periods. I was subconsciously looking for ways to sit down which I found quite surreal. I didn't know what was wrong with me. Incidentally, Mark Human and Kelee Arrowsmith (MDW Mentor and Mark's wife) were walking behind me on our way to a training session one day and they both said that they were concerned about the way I was walking and thought that my back was out of alignment. Little did I know this was the least of my problems!

### **Dealing with the news**

When I got back to Oz I got some physio treatment and found that it gave me some temporary relief but then the soreness would quickly return. I then went to the Chiro and got the same results. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> session I challenged the Chiro and said that I was not getting any better. She recommended that I go and get a scan.

After I had the x-rays I went to the Doctors and he held them up in the light and he looked at me and then back at the x-rays a couple of times with a bewildered look. He basically said point blank "I've seen some 80-year-old men who have better hips than yours"! He said that I had severe arthritis in both hips and that it was probably near the worst he'd seen, especially in someone so young. He was surprised how I was still getting around and training. I was shocked to find out this news. It was a real kick in the guts but at the same time it was also a relief as it finally explained so much with what I'd been feeling and experiencing for such a long time. I had failed to understand and recognise that I had joint pain and a crippling disease not simply muscle soreness.

### **Investigation into treatment options**

I quickly sought one referral after another to see different specialists and so my journey on researching how I was going to fix my hips had commenced. Each Orthopaedic surgeon I saw took one look at my x-rays and said you need a Total Hip Replacement (THR) for both hips and that a hip arthroscopy would be unsuccessful. I had spoken to a couple of mates who had had arthroscopies done on their hips and they had said that it had not done much and if anything had only aggravated things and made it worse.

Luckily one of the surgeons I visited (who had performed a THR on a friend of mine) thought that I might be suited to hip resurfacing (basically they retain your femur and don't chop the top off!) due to my size and age. He recommended me to his old mentor who was a specialist of the specialists when it came to performing the 'Birmingham' cobalt-chrome alloy hip resurfacing which was the same operation that Andy Murray the tennis player had and Mark "The Undertaker" Calaway and he had managed to keep wrestling for another 5-10 years!

Unfortunately for me when I checked my private health insurance, I was only covered for arthroscopy not THR. I had taken out top cover for my wife for pregnancy but I only had minimal cover. I hadn't had any health issues until now. So, with that I upgraded my cover but I wasn't going to be covered for surgery for another 12 months! It was going to be a long 12 months ahead.

After slowly and painfully adapting to the new norm I quickly started to research alternative therapies. I experimented with a couple of rounds of jabs in my hips with Platelet Replacement Plasma (PRP) and peptide growth hormones. At least the doctor was honest enough to admit that he didn't think the therapy would fix my hips but he said it should help alleviate some of the pain. Ironically, the pain and stiffness after the injections was immense as they essentially stuck a very large needle into both hip joints. It didn't make any noticeable difference to my situation apart from lighten my back pocket! Big tip, don't do a workout straight after this while the local anaesthetic is still wearing off. I did this once and it didn't go so well. I could barely drive my manual car home that night without being in excruciating pain and I had no pain medication with me!

I also looked into stem cell therapy. It's still very expensive in Oz (it was going to cost more than \$3k for both hips) and isn't covered by medical insurance. I conceded that my hips were too far gone and it was unlikely that these treatments were going to miraculously regenerate the level of new cartilage I needed around the whole rim of both hip joints. However, I do believe that if you pick up on your injuries earlier enough there is some merit to exploring the benefits of PRP, peptides, and stem cell therapies.

Coincidentally after seeing the Doctor for the PRP he introduced me to one of his patients who was one of the first patients in Victoria who had ceramic on ceramic hip resurfacing. He had recovered well and was also moving well. I did some more research on this new form of hip resurfacing and decided to see the only surgeon in Victoria who was performing this surgery with the new materials. I didn't get a great vibe / gut feel from this particular surgeon and I couldn't get to the bottom of whether this procedure with the new materials was actually going to be covered by my private health insurance as it was under a trial period.

Compared with the 'Birmingham' metal on metal resurfacing there was over 10 years of statistical data and research on all the past results. This surgery and materials had the runs on the board. In the end it was a no brainer I was going to go ahead with the tried and proven Birmingham. At least I knew what the statistical success rate was and potential side effects. The ceramic-on-ceramic resurfacing was an unknown and I didn't particularly want to be a guinea pig for other surgical boffins getting kickbacks from medical R&D companies! As it turned out I discovered post my 2<sup>nd</sup> hip surgery that there had been cases where the ceramic-on-ceramic materials had cracked and failed!

### **Adaptation to the pain and disability**

It certainly took awhile to get used to my predicament. I went through a whole range of emotions from anger, sadness, frustration, mild depression / anxiety, philosophical, optimistic etc. I always tried to remain positive but it wasn't easy at times. It was the first time in my adult life where I'd experienced this new level of physical / mental setback. Basically, I'd been fit and healthy and had no issues like this my whole life.

I remember taking my dog Rocky on a walk around the block one night after work. I got about halfway and I was in so much pain that I had to stop and take a break and I broke down. I had a weak moment. I picked myself up and struggled slowly and painfully with every step to finish

the walk. I thought to myself there had to be an easier way. Pain management wasn't something I was used to. I thought taking pain killers was soft and an easy way out of your problems. I had to learn a hard lesson on this and eventually learn to embrace pain management medication and use it to my advantage. But I was conscious not to develop a dependence on it too much as I didn't want to get addicted to it or potentially damage some of my organs.

Ironically, as part of my pain management I quickly realised that I had to do the opposite to most folk who try to keep their daily step count as high as possible. I had to keep my daily step count as low as possible and try to stay off my feet as much as possible. Being around 100kg I soon realised that I only had a very small window of time each day that I could stand up or walk around before I would be in pain. The longer I walked around or stood up the greater the pain. So, I had to plan my day out on this basis to minimise my steps. This was tricky at times, especially given my job often involved me having to attend and walkaround various construction sites to conduct site inspections. Weekends were often the worst with maintenance and upkeep needed around the house. Plus, I still wanted to keep fit and train in some shape or form.

After another round of jabs with the PRP and peptides the Doctor prescribed me a drug called Celebrex. Up until this point I had only been using Nurofen and Panadol. The Doctor said it was around 8 times stronger than Nurofen and was a common drug used by patients like me with severe arthritis. The timing was good as I about to embark upon another MDW Thailand Zoo camp and I wasn't sure how I'd go getting through it. I knew there was no way I could stand and move around for 4-5 hours of training a day. But the drug certainly worked its magic along with daily Thai massages. I managed to get by attending the training and by sitting down and taking lots of notes and participating where I could I got a lot out of the training camp. I also recognised my physical limitations about how I could / couldn't fight. I realised I was vulnerable in open spaces as I couldn't move around but I could stand and fight with my back against a wall / in the corner. The walls were my friend as they helped keep me on my feet.

When I got back home, I further refined my personal safety habits / tactics / tools. I knew that I couldn't take on a bad guy like I once could, especially in the open. I bought an unbreakable walking cane (knop-kerrie) and an unbreakable umbrella. I started practising with them on tyres to give me the confidence that I knew I could use them under pressure and hit hard. It felt weird going into public with a walking cane, especially my local pub! I certainly got a few funny looks and even strangers coming up and asking questions but it was my little security blanket. Previously I had made decisions ahead of time on challenging robbers outside (eg if they were breaking into our cars) but with my new predicament I changed my planning and thinking on this and a number of other scenarios.

I still kept up my teaching in MDW, and training in Jiu-jitsu and Boxing but I had to make some big adjustments. I could only spar in MDW for a few minutes and would sometimes need to teach the class from sitting down. Not ideal but I think everyone knew it was what it was. I couldn't do 1-2-hour boxing sessions any longer so instead I trained with a mate I met through Jiu-jitsu where we would do some drills / light sparring for short bursts during open mat sessions. My Jiu-jitsu game had to really change. I couldn't do any wrestling / take downs so I would either try a top game with basic passes that I could manage to do or otherwise lie on

my back and work from underneath with very little involvement from my legs so that I could protect my hips from further aggravation/injury. I found that my hips just couldn't take the pressure if I tried to use my legs much.

So, I started my own style of Jiu-jitsu which I dubbed 'Starfish Jiu-jitsu'! Just lie down on your back like a star fish and cop it! I still got a good workout in and I became a lot more comfortable defending against higher belts from more often than not being on my back. I prided myself on making it very difficult for the higher belts to submit me. I knew that if I could resist their attempts at submission that I would have a fighting chance of survival if I ever got caught on the ground in the street in a no rules situation using 'dirty' tactics. I think I won the respect of many of my jiu-jitsu peers simply for the fact that I kept turning up and training despite my physical disabilities. During this time, I was awarded with another two stripes on my belt which was a small reward for turning up and continuing to train.

### **Preparing for surgery**

I found the best way for me to prepare for the surgery in my head was likening it to preparing for a fight in the ring. I knew that I needed to be as physically and mentally strong as I could going into the surgery so that I could deal with what was going to be thrown my way post-surgery.

A few months prior to my first surgery in July 2020 the world was hit by a pandemic which shut down basically everything, including all the gyms. This was probably a blessing in disguise for me personally as it forced me to stop doing MDW, boxing and jiu-jitsu and other activities that were a little counterproductive to my hips and to focus purely on the strength and conditioning that I needed to get myself and all the supporting muscles around the hip joint as strong as possible.

Over the years I had progressively added to and setup my home gym in anticipation of one day being a parent and needing a place at home to train in amongst domestic duties. This paid dividends during the lockdowns as I was able to utilise my home gym whilst attending virtual strength and conditioning classes and really achieve some great results during what was a pretty horrible time for a lot of people. Big thanks to coach Sylvia Lokollo who really looked after me and helped me a lot during this difficult time.

There is a lot of planning and preparation required for major surgery. I was thankful that I locked in my date for surgery almost a year ahead of time. However, I was surprised at how much paperwork, tests, scans etc were required prior to the surgery. It really did take up a lot of my time to work through it all and not something you want to leave to the last minute!

Ironically, my 1<sup>st</sup> surgery nearly didn't go ahead as planned due to the Covid-19 lockdowns. Some non-essential elective surgeries were suspended. Luckily, I was one of the last few patients that got admitted before we went into even more draconian lockdown measures! It got sprung on me last minute that I had to get Covid tested and go into isolation for 5 days prior to my hospital admission. It was a pain in the butt but I was just really relieved and happy that my surgery was actually going to proceed after a long 12 month wait! I was nervous before going into the surgery but I had a positive feeling of let's get on with it and get it done



so I could take one big step towards getting back to a semi-normal life! The good news was my wife was pregnant with our first child. This gave me extra motivation to get things fixed so that one day I could run around after the little ankle biter!

## **Post op Struggles**

Hip resurfacing surgery is classified as major surgery for a reason. It's no joke! I was lucky that my first hip operation was a success. Despite my positive thinking and preparedness going into the surgery nothing quite prepares you for experiencing the real thing. The pain is pretty full on in the first 24 hours or so, especially after the anaesthesia wears off. On day 2 I had stopped taking the morphine thinking I was going well but I hadn't taken into consideration that I hadn't been moving. As soon as I finished doing my first physio session, I had to get in a wheel chair to go downstairs to get an x-ray. I had not taken any pain meds and I was in a lot of pain. My brief bravado was short lived as I quickly learned the hard way to overstate my pain levels to the nurses to ensure I was able to better manage my pain levels!

In my stay at hospital, I had a few challenges and setbacks. I had a blood infection and developed a high temperature. As a precaution I was treated as a Covid patient and was isolated for 3 days until the results got back. No visitors were allowed. I didn't have Covid but I had chronic itchiness that eventually got diagnosed as shingles and chronic hiccupping. I learned that occasionally anaesthetic can irritate the vagus nerve which controls hiccupping. I can tell you that hiccupping for hours on end in the middle of the night when you are trying to sleep is like a form of mental torture!

Despite the setbacks I got discharged after 5 days and was on my way home with a cocktail of strong medication which I had never taken before for the pain relief, hiccupping, and shingles etc. It felt good to be home and to see my family again. At the time when I got home, I thought I was going pretty well physically and mentally. However, when I look back now I seriously underestimated how much rest and recovery I needed. In the first week when I got home, I stupidly went straight back to working from home. I was getting taxis to appointments etc. I was doing too much and I thought I was going ok as the drugs was masking my feelings. I loaded up on the opioids. I started to have hallucinations and other strange mental confusion episodes which really spooked me.

By the end of the first week my mental health had deteriorated and I was having mild depression / anxiety issues, insomnia, and a nervous breakdown. I had to utilise 'tactical breathing' to stop the onset of panic attacks. I got my wife to hide away all my 'personal safety tools' from me as I was concerned what I might do in my altered state of consciousness. I didn't realise at the time that I was going through what the 'shrinks' call an 'adjustment disorder'. I spoke with a psychologist sometime later about this to provide me with some clarity and to unpack what had happened to me.

I had really dug myself into a real hole in a short period. For the first time in my life, I could truly understand and appreciate what it's like for those who suffer depression / anxiety. Fortunately for me my symptoms were only mild and temporary.

## **Road to Recovery**

There were a number of things I needed to quickly rectify to get back on track. Firstly, I seriously underestimated how much rest I needed and I had to teach myself how to actually rest. As strange as it sounds, I didn't know how to rest and switch off when I got home. You're forced to rest in hospital but not so much at home. After the first week of hell at home I took another two weeks off work and turned the phone off for prolonged periods. It's amazing how addicted we are to our phones but too much screen time was certainly counterproductive to my rest and recovery as it sucked me back into the daily stresses of work with emails and phone calls and virtual meetings.

I really had to try hard to find my 'Zen'. I used breathing / meditation which helped a lot. I got outside more to get some fresh air and sunshine. I kept a medicine diary. Sounds silly but when you're on a lot of different strong meds and not with it mentally it's easy to lose track of your dosages. I became my own nurse by regularly monitoring my temperature and blood pressure. I found this reassuring to myself that my vitals were ok to help avoid my mind playing tricks on me. I spent more time with my baby girl and would have naps with her. I read books and watched comedy movies. I listened to jazz music to relax / sleep. I discussed my issues with close friends / family who were checking in with me. I delegated 'home safety' duties to my wife which wasn't easy for me to let go of but it had to be done to allow me to rest and get better.

I embraced the physical process of the rehabilitation and I made sure I did all the physio exercises and repetitions required. It was satisfying to see and feel the physical progress I made in the first few weeks post-surgery in being able to go from barely moving to getting around with two crutches, down to one and then walking unaided.

After one month I finally felt ready to go back to work and back to the gym. Soon I was jumping in the sauna, hot tub, and a cold swimming pool to assist with my recovery. Given my other hip was still struggling the feeling of weightlessness and water resistance aided me a lot doing my exercises in the pool.

After two months I managed to get back to doing some jiu-jitsu and boxing which was much easier than before I had the first surgery. Even walking and standing was much easier as I found that I could put more load bearing weight on the new hip. However, if I over did things, I was quickly reminded of the pain in the old hip that needed to be replaced.

## **Hip replacement number two**

Fortunately, I was able to book in five months after the first hip replacement surgery just before Xmas and the plan was to take a month off over Xmas and new year's. The whole process the second time around was so much easier. It's amazing how the body and brain adapt. I knew what to expect and what to do at every turn. I had virtually no issues or complications physically or mentally the second time around apart from chronic itchiness which I understand was probably due to the Opioids. That's not to say that the second surgery was a walk in the park. There was definitely a lot of pain to manage and sleep deprivation that came with it all but by contrast to the first surgery I coped significantly better.

I had come off all the strong pain meds within the first 10 days which made life a lot easier in many ways. The second time around I also had an at home physio visit weekly for the first month. Everything snowballed the right way and I attribute a lot of that to resting properly and finding my 'Zen' with the recovery process.

The surgeon cleared me at 4 weeks which was 2 weeks ahead of my first surgery and a pretty quick turnaround. Having the other hip already fixed certainly helped a lot as I was able to walk a lot more and ride a bike which I hadn't been able to do for nearly 18 months.

## **Conclusion**

At the time of writing this 'novella' I'm at 3 months post-surgery from the second hip resurfacing surgery. My surgeon and physio are impressed with my recovery and progress. My abductor muscle where the entry wound site is still healing but I'm recovering nicely. Being able to freely ride a bike, do martial arts footwork, and having just returned from a 5-hour hunting / hiking trip on steep terrain are some of the new activities and freedoms which I feel extremely fortunate that I can reconnect with.

Having a debilitating disease / illness and then major surgery is a humbling experience and I can certainly empathise with folks from all walks of life who have to go through these challenging experiences. I'm looking forward to becoming more functional / mobile and increasing my range of motion in my hips so that I perform everyday tasks like putting on my socks and bending down to pick things up more easily and running after my little girl Luna when she starts to walk soon.

I'd like to thank all my friends and family who have helped me over the last two years during this challenging period of my life. In particular I'd like to personally acknowledge the following individuals who have helped me a lot with their mentorship, coaching, and friendship:

Mark Human  
Kelee Arrowsmith  
Andy Elliott  
Sylvia Lokollo

Lastly and most importantly big thanks to my beautiful and caring wife Greta Day who has been by my rock by my side throughout the whole ordeal.

Listed below are my top 10 tips or lessons learned which I'd like to share with you. Thanks for reading my story and journey.

## **My Top 10 Tips for dealing with injuries / illnesses:**

### **1. Prepare and plan for your surgery well ahead of time**

There's a lot of important decisions to make with major surgery (eg. type of operation, which surgeon, hospital, and a lot of paperwork, etc). I used the 12 months of wait time before my medical insurance cover applied to do a lot of research / education before I proceeded with my first surgery. I probably saw 10 or more GP's, surgeons, physios, chiros to seek out different medical opinions. For me the most important was seeing a few different surgeons before I picked the one that was right for me. I recommend speaking to other patients and getting their feedback on the surgery and the surgeon.

### **2. Plan your personal safety**

I couldn't fight or move like I used to. I was even more indisposed after I got home from the hospital. I recommend that you take this into consideration around not only your own personal safety but your home safety and consider any what-if scenarios. You will need the support of your loved ones. Be prepared that you will need to delegate certain roles / tasks to others during your state of vulnerability.

### **3. Track your medication**

When you are as high as a kite on Opioids or suffering from confusion episodes like I was I highly recommend that you keep a medication diary so that you can accurately track what medication dosage you took and when at home.

### **4. Monitor your health (both physical and mental)**

I recommend having a blood pressure monitor and digital thermometer as part of your home first aid kit but even more so when you are just out of hospital and are fighting off infections. It saves unnecessary trips to the Doctors and gives you peace of mind, especially when your mind is wanting to play tricks on you while taking strong pain meds.

Additionally, it's important to monitor your mental health. It's easy to get in a rut and I found sharing my struggles with close friends / family helpful to get things off my chest to decompress. As the saying goes a problem shared is a problem halved. I also recommend speaking to a mental health professional if required as they often have coping mechanisms and perspectives that friends / family cannot provide. There is no shame or stigma in doing this.

### **5. Find your 'Zen' and positive mindset**

Recovery from major surgery is not a simple 5-minute process. There can be lots of steps, hurdles, and set-backs / complications. Having patience and the right mindset is key. Being

able to find your happy place during dark or challenging times is vital. For me breathing, meditation, watching TV / sport / movies, reading, spending time with family, getting fresh air, listening to music, going to bed early, and doing my rehab was all part of achieving a successful recovery.

## **6. Embrace the power of rest and recovery**

Allowing adequate time to rest properly to me was the most important thing. It was the biggest difference between my first surgery and the second and I cannot emphasise this point enough. My ego was well and truly bruised and battered over this point and I learned the hard way that when it's time to rest that means rest and nothing else!

## **7. Utilise pain medication / management to your advantage**

This was another thing that caused me an ego bruising. I had never taken much pain medication previously but quickly learned to embrace it and use it to my advantage before and after surgery.

However, it is also important not to become addicted to pain meds and be aware of their side effects. I had never taken the stronger pain meds previously and learned the hard way about some of their side effects. You certainly don't want to be driving a car or having to make critical decisions while taking Opioids.

## **8. Do your pre-hab and re-hab**

Sounds obvious but I'm sure a lot of people don't do the exercises and repetitions required to recover in a timely manner. Put in the work and reap the rewards.

## **9. Don't dismiss alternative therapies**

Some people quickly dismiss alternative therapies as being a bit wishy-washy but I do believe that there are other means / methods of treatment available that can make a difference with prevention or cure. Unfortunately for me by the time I found out my diagnosis it was too late but if I had found out earlier alternative treatment options like PRP, peptides, cortisone, stem cell therapies, CBD oil etc may have helped my cause.

## **10. Train around injuries not through them**

I wish I had known this invaluable mantra from 10 plus years ago. This was a harsh lesson that I like many others have had to deal with through my own personal injury troubles that eventually led me to having bilateral hip replacements!