

Joy Van Horn: Crippling Arthritis and Knee Replacement



This September, I will celebrate 30 years of working out; with 29 of them at Vessell's Fitness. When I was 32 years old, my son contracted the German measles and guess who caught them from him? The disease affected my joints and was the beginning of arthritis. By the time I was 40, my hips and lower back were so painful that I could only bend at a 20 degree angle and could not get out of bed without help.

My doctors recommended exercise. But how could I exercise when I couldn't get out of bed by myself? It was at this time that Bridgett and aerobizing came to Magic Lantern Skating Rink. On my 40th birthday I realized if I didn't do something I'd be in a wheelchair soon. Therefore, I started the classes with Bridgett. Within 6 months there was no more pain. WOW, what a miracle! The only time now that I have back or hip pain is when I don't exercise. Kathy Ball was also in this class and a few months later I followed her to Vessell's Fitness Complex where she was hired to begin an aerobics program. I have been at Vessell's ever since.

Exercise has helped my back and helped delay eventual knee replacement. It has been 6 months since my bi lateral knee replacements and I am working my way back again. Peggy has always been there to encourage and inspire me. As her members have gotten older she has developed different classes that keep us moving within our abilities.

As for diet...I don't. After many years of yo-yo dieting, I have learned portion control and how to eat healthy. My weight has stayed the same for the last 10 years with lots of fruit, veggies, whole wheat and chicken. Sorry Peggy but oatmeal is not for me.

Many thanks to Peggy and that wonderful laugh of hers. To her husband, Mark for teaching me the difference between being fat and feeling fat on the inside. And to Mike (no whining) for making me see that my short endomorphic muscles would never be long and thin. Hope to see you around for another 10 years.