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“Never To Be Forgotten” Operation Walk Vietnam

by E. Mark Hammerberg M.D.



Operation Walk Vietnam patients and team members pose for a group photo near the end of the March 2008 Mission

When I was given the opportunity to join the Operation Walk team on its mission to Vietnam, I had some idea of what to expect, but there is no way that I could have known exactly how rewarding the trip would turn out to be.

I had a vague notion that I would enjoy the challenges facing a surgical team operating in a foreign land. I had an idea that we would have to be flexible, that we would have to come up with unique solutions for problems specific to an unusually austere environment. There were difficulties, but I was surprised by the relative ease with which we were able to overcome seemingly daunting obstacles.

Much of our success can be attributed to the help we received from the local doctors and nurses. They welcomed our team, and they were eager to participate. The resident orthopaedic surgeons helped us screen, examine, and interview patients. The local anesthesiologists were eager to participate and they helped Dr. Julio Raya run multiple simultaneous surgeries. More importantly, everyone was eager to learn our protocols for postoperative rehabilitation and recovery. We had the satisfaction of performing a total of 68 joint replacements during our short stay, and the Vietnamese doctors and nurses were trained to be responsible for the long-term care of our patients.

In order to accomplish so much in so little time, we needed to bring our own team and supplies with us. In some ways, we established a small “hospital within a hospital.” Even though I was there, and I saw it with my own eyes, it still seems hard for me to believe. So much needed to be done: shipping supplies, sorting them out, sterilizing them, distributing them to the operating rooms and hospital wards. Most of the effort obviously took place before most of us arrived by the team leaders, Jeri Ward and Mary Ellen Seiben. We may have operated for four days, but preparations for our week long stay in Vietnam took more than a year.

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The Dorr
Arthritis Institute
Medical Associates

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Exercise Before Surgery

by Cathi Dedman, PT.



What exercises should I do to prepare for surgery? This is a very common question asked by those individuals who are considering joint replacement surgery. First, realize that what is appropriate for one person is not

always true for another. Each person enters into the surgical intervention at different fitness levels.

Second, the old adage no pain no gain does not apply here. Pushing exercises that inflame the affected joint are not only painful but are counterproductive to the rehabilitation process after surgery. You do, however, want to find ways to maintain your strength, flexibility, and fitness level in spite of your symptoms.

The most basic way to work the muscles surrounding the hip and knee joints is to perform isometric contractions. An isometric contraction is when the muscle contracts without a change in the joint position.

Performing these "muscle setting" exercises can limit muscle atrophy when done regularly and when joint movement is painful and not tolerated. Examples of these include quadriceps sets (anterior thigh) and gluteal sets. These exercises can be done by contracting the muscle and holding for at least five seconds. There is no set rule for the number of repetitions that need to be performed, however, the more you do the more effective they will be. Start with a number you are comfortable with and increase the number gradually to prevent undue soreness. If these are tolerated well, exercises incorporating the available joint range of motion can also be initiated. This allows for the muscle to be strengthened throughout the available range of motion. This should be limited to a pain free range of motion of the joint. Bending and straightening the knee or bringing the hip out to the side/front/back are a few examples.



To perform an isometric contraction of the anterior thigh muscle (quadriceps) the leg starts in a resting position out straight



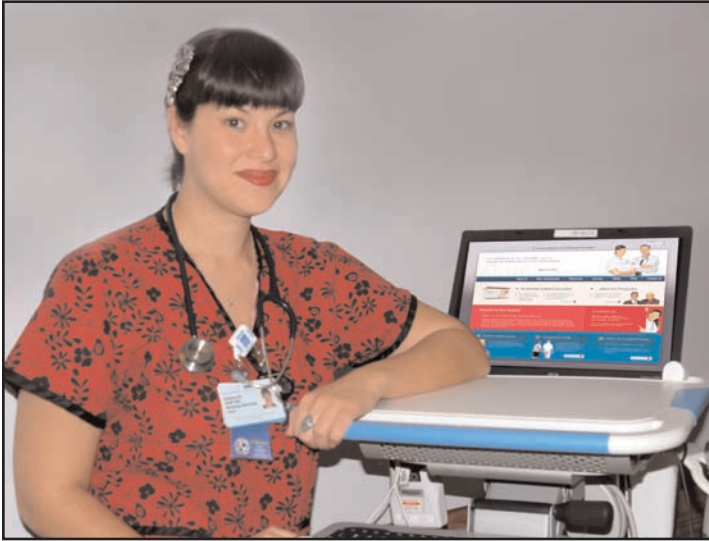
When the muscle is contracted the back of the knee is pressed down towards the floor

Pain with standing or walking is a major limiting factor in the participation in a regular fitness routine. If available, the use of a pool is a helpful tool and often allows for significant increases in activity tolerance. The buoyant property of the water decreases the effect of your body weight on the joints of the lower body making it ideal for those with joint pain with walking. In addition, the water gives a resistance to mobility aiding in strengthening of the muscles of not only the legs but of the trunk as well. Simple walking in waist high or higher water alone is a way to increase activity and can facilitate a more normal walking pattern in the absence of pain. Adding in leg exercises can allow people to enjoy the ability to move joints more freely than when these exercises are attempted out of the water.

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The Move to 7 North

by Deanna Reina, R.N.



I don't think I know a single person who has experienced a move that was not stressful or unpleasant at times. Now imagine having to pack up and move not just an apartment full of "stuff", but an ENTIRE team of people to a new and unfamiliar place. I was fortunate to follow Dr. Dorr to Good Samaritan Hospital. Was it stressful? Yes! Was it nerve racking? Yes! Was it worth it? Yes! The one thing that no one can deny is that the Dorr Arthritis Institute Medical Associates is built on the wonderful people that make it what it is. There would be no Arthritis Institute if there was not a highly trained, multidisciplinary team of experts that provide quality care and truly care about the patients. We joined an already fully functioning team of expert nurses on a specialized orthopaedic unit and as a result of this "marriage", the A.I team has now doubled. This is great news for patients. The nurses at Good Sam have been very helpful in orienting us to our new surroundings and teaching us how to use the Meditech computer systems, which none of us had used before. In return, we have been teaching them about Arthritis Institute protocols so they too can be instrumental in treating our patients, as well as collaborating in research and the development of new care plans. I would like to thank everyone at Good Sam for their patience as we get comfortable and also for being so open minded and flexible about the variety of changes they admittedly had to endure with us joining the team. Like I said, I know it's been a tough couple of months, but I have no doubt that the expansion of the family can only mean great things for the future of the Arthritis Institute!

"Never To Be Forgotten Operation Walk Vietnam" Continued from page 1

The day after we landed in Ho Chi Minh City, Operation Walk was set in full motion. The morning was spent screening our patients, learning their histories, performing physical exams, and reviewing x-rays. The afternoon was spent preparing our preoperative plans. By the evening of the first day, we had performed our first surgeries. To me, this is amazing. As resources are strained, the need to be flexible is paramount. This project absolutely requires initiative and understanding from everyone involved, and I was particularly impressed by the extreme cooperation and communication between all members of the Operation Walk team.

Many of our patients were similar to the patients I see every day in Los Angeles: older adults with typical "wear and tear" arthritis. But unlike the patients we treat in the United States, our Vietnamese patients had no notion that their arthritis could ever be "cured." These people had accepted their end-stage arthritis as part of the normal process of aging, and several of these patients had grown used to the idea that they would never walk again. Few words are needed to express the surgeon's satisfaction when a previously crippled patient takes his first steps merely three hours after surgery.



An Operation Walk patient and his family awaiting his turn in surgery during our trip to Ho Chi Minh City

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“Never To Be Forgotten Operation Walk Vietnam”
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A young Vietnamese patient takes her first steps just one day after Dr. Hammerberg and the Operation Walk team replaced both of her hips

Some patients stand out in my memory. There was the elderly man with bad arthritis in both knees. We told him that we could replace both of them. He understood that we had brought only so many knee parts with us, and he suspected that we could make better use of our limited supply if he only had one operation. All he really needed, he explained, was one good knee. Sure enough, he was walking around after surgery, still limping on his one bad knee, but he appeared to be as satisfied as if we had replaced them both. Looking at the crowds of people who had assembled outside our clinics, he was certain that we could find another candidate for the unused knee.

I will never forget the young woman who could not walk into our clinic. Her family came with her, in order to carry her from place to place. She had two worn out crutches, and she could make some slow progress on her own, but this was no typical crutch ambulation. She really could not tolerate weight-bearing activities, and she used her crutches more like stilts under her arms, vaulting a few short feet at a time.



Dr. Mark Hammerberg, Operation Walk Vietnam

Within two to three days, most of our patients had recovered enough to go home. There was almost no time to get to know them, just a few short days. In less than a week, we had met our patients, operated on them, and sent them home to recover. I regret that I cannot follow the long-term recovery of these patients, but I am sure that they will do well. In those few days that I knew them, it was clear that our patients were thankful. Most of them wanted to “show off” how well they could stand and walk. It seemed that all our patients were eager to pose for photographs with their surgeons, nurses, and therapists. I am particularly satisfied that I have saved these “souvenirs” from Vietnam. Looking at these photos, it is clear that everybody is smiling!



Dr. Mark Hammerberg has just completed his year long surgical fellowship with Drs. Dorr, Long and Harris. The entire team wishes Dr. Hammerberg and his family much success in their new home in Boulder, Colorado!

Save The Date : Saturday November 15, 2008



We will have our annual fund-raiser for Operation Walk at the California Club in downtown Los Angeles.

Invitations will be mailed in September. For more information call Jeri Ward at 213-977-2511 or Email Jeri at jward@goodsam.org

Exercise Before Surgery

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While most people focus on muscle strengthening the flexibility of the muscles is also a key component. Gentle, gradual stretching of muscles can aide in maintaining joint range of motion and the mobility of the soft tissue that surrounds the joint (i.e. muscles). Increasing flexibility is a gradual process and takes time to gain. Move the leg slowly through the range of motion until restriction is felt. As with the exercises, the amount of time held will vary between individuals but the longer a stretch can be held the more effective it will be. Stretches should not be painful but rather a pulling sensation. Avoid bouncing or moving quickly with the stretch.



Example of an active hip range of motion exercise in standing

Hip Replacement

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- Present no additional health concern

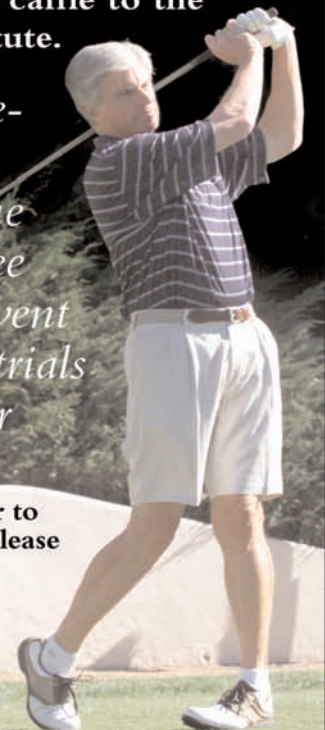
When Mike Flanagan needed a hip replacement, he came to the Dorr Arthritis Institute.

"The hip replacement procedure was easier on me than the knee surgery I underwent at the Olympic trials during my senior year at USC."

For more information, or to make an appointment, please call (213) 977-2280

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Letters to The Editor

A very professional group.
Recommend to everyone.
The care I received was incredible!
Heartfelt gratitude goes to Dr. Dorr and Jeri Ward.
Replaced two bad hips, with two terrific hips, six years ago.
Impressed with my very first visit and every visit thereafter.
The best people in the business.
Imprecable service before, during, and after surgery.
So satisfied with the outcome of my surgery. I can play beach volleyball again!

I can't say enough about The Arthritis Institute.
Number one in my opinion.
Sensitive to my needs, while in the hospital.
Thank you to a talented "Dream Team" for giving me back my life.
Immediate relief from my pain, after surgery.
The physical therapists were "top notch."
Unequaled when it comes to all of the knowledge/information the Institute imparts through the whole process.
They always made me feel like I was important.
Ecstatic that I am able to walk, practice yoga, and garden again!

Cheers to all the dedicated and hard working people at the Arthritis Institute. May you continue to make people healthy and happy for years to come.

Sincerely,

Nancy Bergstrom (bilateral hip surgery April 9, 2002)

Dear Jeri,

We thought you might enjoy this information for your next newsletter. As you know, Arnie had both hips done in 1997 and I had my knee done in 1996 and I am sure that you will agree that we are really still going strong. I thought I would include a picture as proof positive.

Much love and our eternal gratitude to Dr. Dorr and his staff,

Carol age "very young" and Arnie age 91 Cohen



Dear Jeri, Dr. Dorr, and Staff,

Congratulations and much success in your new home at Good Samaritan Hospital. Change is scary – ask me, I know, but it is also invigorating. I am so honored to have my new hip (four months now!) When people see me walk they are moved to tears since the improvement is so drastic and wonderful. I sing your praises wherever I go and I cannot thank you enough for giving me my life back. Keep up the great work and may you all be continued to be blessed in your new home.

Love,

Diane Ward

Meet The Staff - Our Medical Assistants

by Jeri Ward R.N.



Maria Martinez, Jan Kushiner, Barbara Durity

Barbara Durity, Jan Kushiner and Maria Martinez are the medical assistants for the Dorr Arthritis Institute Medical Associates. Barb has worked with Dr. Dorr since 1999, Jan with Dr. Long since 2002 and Maria has been with Dr. Harris for over 2 years.

Together, they work to make things flow well during your office visits before and after surgery. Just the paperwork alone, that it takes to prepare each person for surgery, is a daunting task. Add to that medication refills, chart preparation, preparing x-ray and lab orders, (and then getting the results to the doctors!), answering questions, giving directions, coordinating patient calls, and getting authorization for tests. You have to respect them all for their ability to juggle many tasks at once, and still be smiling at the end of the day.

I think of Barb as the “General” (probably a side effect of her many years with Dr. Dorr!). She is a multi-tasker and a crowd control expert.

Jan is the “organizer”. She takes on the extra task of keeping the clinic supplies ordered, put away neatly and accounted for. Her charts and paperwork are always in order. She has an outstanding knowledge of patient care in the clinical setting. Jan and Barb will always stay to get the job done. It is not unusual to find them finishing that last bit of paperwork at the end of a long day.

Maria is the “youngster”. She is the youngest and newest medical assistant. Right from the start we knew she would fit in with the team. She is smart and an eager learner. Her ability to catch on fast made several of us encourage her to go to nursing school to become an RN. She currently balances school and work effortlessly. I can always count on her to be here first thing in the morning.

I love working with these three women because they make a nice balance to our team. Each has strengths that contribute to the clinic. They work together to assure that all of the patients get the best of care. They are always there to help the doctors and the physicians’ assistants.

The Arthritis Institute performs approximately 1,000 joints replacements per year. The medical assistants are committed to making sure that each patient has a positive experience.



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Check our website for news and current information
about joint replacement and the Arthritis Institute.

www.dorrrarthritisinstitute.org

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