



## Speaking from Experience *Osteoarthritis: Hip & knee*

### Transcript for chapter 1 of 8: Diagnosis

**Rosalie, 46 (6 years since last knee replacement):** From a very young age, I had problems with my knees. They would dislocate, unfortunately. As time went by, they just wouldn't stay in place. So, I had surgery to them to try to keep them in place. And then much later, perhaps late teens, early twenties - after I'd had lots and lots of surgery to them - actually, it was later than that. Probably by the time I was in my early thirties, they finally decided that, 'Oh, you've probably got osteoarthritis in the knees'. That was probably a result of all that surgery to the knees and the repeated dislocations, just all that wear and tear on those joints.

**Jack and Anne, 54 (1 year since Anne's knee replacement):** Before I found out that I had osteoarthritis, I was fairly active in general. Not many things were difficult to do. Unfortunately, when I was 25, I was in a car accident and I was told then that I'd probably have 50% loss of use of my leg. So, it was fairly obvious at the time that arthritis was going to be an issue with that leg as well.

**Elaine, 63 (7 years since right knee replacement):** At 14, I was aware that I'd have osteoarthritis, having been diagnosed with osteochondritis, having a piece of bone removed from my knee, there were also hereditary factors - my father. I was told then that, ultimately, I would have osteoarthritis in later years.

**Alison, 75 (7 years since hip replacement):** I was quite active; played tennis a lot. Had three children and was very busy. But probably, I was beginning to feel a bit of arthritis, a bit of pain, but just managed it; didn't worry about it.

**Bernie, (Approximately 20 years since last joint replacement):** I was a teacher, a very sedentary occupation. I moved into tertiary teacher education, still fairly sedentary. A lot of my friends in that field were very active, so we used to arrange a daily run when we could fit it into the schedule. The social part of that was a big attraction.

**John, (18 months since hip replacement):** I had a very healthy lifestyle before I was diagnosed with osteoarthritis; I surfed, I walked, I swam. I didn't party a lot, I didn't drink a lot; I guess you could say that in some ways I was a bit boring, really.

**Shelagh, 69 (8 months since right hip replacement; 3 years since left knee replacement):** I became a dietician, I trained to become a dietician, and I was the first renal transplant dietician at the hospital. And then, when I became a mum, I had to give that up, because it was 7 days a week, 365 days a year. So, I did teaching, and as I progressed through the teaching business, I did social work to survive. So, I worked with those three areas, until I couldn't do it anymore, literally.

**Elaine, 63 (7 years since right knee replacement):** I did ballet for many years; played squash for many years, until the pain got so bad and I realised that maybe the osteoarthritis was starting to kick in then.

**John, (18 months since hip replacement):** The first signs that I had some sort of issue with my hip was a lot of pain and stiffness, in my right hip. Because that would sort of come and go, I didn't really take a lot of notice of it. I guess I was getting a little bit older, and you just sort of live with it.

**Alison, 75 (7 years since hip replacement):** Just pain in the hip area, really. Perhaps, down the leg a little bit. It got worse and worse, and night time was difficult to sleep, sometimes - well, more often than not. They were the main things that made me realise that there was something the matter.

**Bernie, (Approximately 20 years since last joint replacement):** The condition gradually developed and showed up increasingly in other joints. And my activity levels reduced as a direct result of that.

**John, (18 months since hip replacement):** I went and saw my GP and there was an x-ray taken and the x-ray showed that the head of the femur was very worn and initially, there was still cartilage in the socket. Eventually, that completely wore away.

**Bernie, (Approximately 20 years since last joint replacement):** X-rays showed osteoarthritis and the doctor who gave me the results of the x-ray said, "Have you been trying to out-bowl Dennis Lillee?"

**Shelagh, 69 (8 months since right hip replacement; 3 years since left knee replacement):** The first signs, I didn't acknowledge, I didn't understand. The first time I had an incident, I was only 16, and it was in the days when we were doing the twist. I was busy twisting and all of a sudden I was locked in position and carted off to hospital in that position. They gave me drugs and the subject was never mentioned. It wasn't until I was cleaning out my mum's stuff after she died, about 10 years ago, that I found the certificate, which said I had osteoarthritis.

**Bernie, (Approximately 20 years since last joint replacement):** I went home that night and my wife said, "Did you get your x-ray results?" and I said yes. "Well, what were they?" I couldn't remember, I had actually repressed memory of the thing. I phoned a colleague, whom I'd told about it during the day. He said, "I do believe you said 'osteoarthritis'". Clearly, I'd thought that this couldn't be me, this is an old person's problem. That was my immediate reaction, 'not me'.

**Shelagh, 69 (8 months since right hip replacement; 3 years since left knee replacement):** I was sent off to have physio and OT [occupational therapy]. That's when I realised the severity of the condition. I got a terrific shock, but I figured that it was progressive, nothing I can do, best get on with it.

**Jack and Anne, 54 (1 year since Anne's knee replacement):** I guess, for me, it was taking it in my stride, because I really didn't know what that meant. I didn't really know what I was in for.

**Alison, 75 (7 years since hip replacement):** I didn't want to think about it, mind you. I didn't want to know that there was anything in the arthritis field because I had a mother with arthritis and I didn't want to think that it was hereditary. It wasn't going to happen to me.



**Jack and Anne, 54 (1 year since Anne's knee replacement):** There was more talking to the family about what they were suffering and how they managed it. The more you spoke to people, the more you realise that there are quite a few people out there that actually do suffer from arthritis, varying kinds of arthritis.

**Alison, 75 (7 years since hip replacement):** I was quite accepting of the fact that something would need to be done, but I hadn't quite worked out what. That was perhaps not in my mind operation maybe, but certainly, what can I do about it? I'll have to pursue this.