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MY NAME IS

My Name Is: Nellie Sparks

Recipient of total shoulder replacement



(/uploads/original/1482361271_504d.jpg)

Lakewood resident Nellie Sparks recently retired from a career as a civil engineer for the National Parks Service. She also received a new shoulder from the Simpliciti Shoulder System, and has been working toward full mobility.

COURTESY

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Clarke Reader (mailto:creader@coloradocommunitymedia.com)

About me

I grew up in Oklahoma, but left the state at 18 to come out to Colorado for college, and I've been here ever since.

I recently retired from a career in civil engineering, where I worked at the National Park Service. Since retiring, I spend a lot of time outside — I like to bike and hike. I stay as active as I can. I also like to do yard work.

Getting my shoulder back

I started having shoulder problems with my left side about four to five years ago, which ended up being a rotator cuff tear. I first noticed the problem when I tried to take a pose in yoga, and realized I wasn't as flexible as I should have been. Putting stress on it hurt really bad.

I put off getting it addressed, and cortisone shots got me by.

I wasn't having any less pain and was getting really frustrated. I went to see Dr. Armodios Hatzidakis at Western Orthopedics because he's an expert, and he told me about the Simpliciti Shoulder System. It's important to make sure you have all your questions answered and feel comfortable before you agree to anything.

I had my surgery on Sept. 23 of 2015, and had seven weeks of recovery and I've been going to a lot of physical therapy. I kept going and going, because I wasn't going to stop until they kicked me out — I wanted my shoulder back. It was difficult but worth it.

The pain has mostly gone away, and for me it's not about pain, but about strength and getting flexibility back to 100 percent.

A pain-free life

I'm glad to do everyday activities pain-free, like putting on my coat or a seatbelt. It seemed like it hurt all the time.

The pain eventually got so I couldn't do things I really enjoyed like yoga, and so had to take up different things like biking and hiking. I'm looking forward to being able to do these activities again.

If you have suggestions for My Name Is ..., contact Clarke Reader at creader@coloradocommunitymedia.com.