

At 35 years old, I was on an early morning run when my groin started hurting so bad I had to stop. I didn't know it at the time but that would be the last time I would go running before my hip replacement.

Even though I was told I needed surgery, I wouldn't do it because I was scared I would have to give up my active life and become a spectator. Over the next two years, my hip got so bad that I could no longer walk without a severe limp. But it wasn't until I fell down in my boss' office that I finally decided to get my hip replaced.

I called my brother who works in the medical field in California and asked him if he could talk to some of his colleagues to see if there was a surgeon they would recommend. Finding the right surgeon was so important to me that I was willing to travel out of state.

A couple days later, my brother called me back and told me that there was a really talented surgeon who specializes in hip replacements located Northern Nevada and his name was Dr. Sanjai Shukla. He also told me that his colleague said that this is the surgeon him and his family would go to.

In my mind, I tried to imagine what this surgeon was going to be like and I what I imagined in my mind could not have been more inaccurate. He was personable, knowledgeable, articulate, humble, friendly, thorough, and patient despite all the questions I kept asking. He was so easy to talk to that I even told him what my brother's colleague said.

I also told him that I was worried about ending up with a surgeon that would take short cuts and not go the extra mile for me while I am on the operating table and that is when I asked him this question, "how do I know you're a good surgeon and not just a nice guy?" He looked at me right in the eyes and without any hesitation he said, "There is a reason why your brother's colleague would let me operate on him and his family. I didn't earn the reputation I have by taking shortcuts."

It has been three years since my hip replacement and Dr. Shukla has allowed me to continue life as a participant and not a spectator.

On a personal note, something I learned from this experience is that living in pain did not just affect me; it negatively affected my family as well. When I lived in constant pain, I found it difficult, if not impossible to be a good dad and husband. I was not supportive and involved like I wanted to be or should have been. The pain I chose to endure day in and day out, prevented me from being my best self. I should have taken care of my hip sooner than I did; if not for myself, then for my family.

So as soon as my other hip needs to be replaced I will not put it off and wait. Instead, I will get my hip replaced as soon as I need to because I know a hip replacement won't make me a spectator because Dr. Shukla is the man and everyone knows it!

Brandon Bird