

Living with knee pain

A Patient Case Example



Dr Craig Donohue

MBBS, FRACS (Ortho),
FAOrthA

**Orthopaedic Surgery,
Hip & Knee**

**To arrange an appointment with
Dr Donohue, please contact:**

Victorian Orthopaedic Associates
Suite 7A, Knox Private Hospital
262 Mountain Hwy, Wantirna 3152

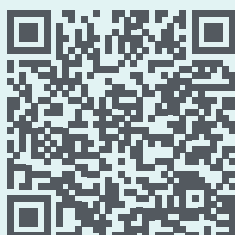
P 03 8828 8388

F 03 8828 8389

E reception@voa.com.au

W voa.com.au

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Knee Osteoarthritis

By Mr Craig Donohue

Living with knee pain

A man in his mid-60s was referred by his GP after experiencing ongoing pain and stiffness in his right knee for several years.

He noticed the pain was worse with activity such as walking or climbing stairs and improved with rest. Over time, his symptoms gradually increased, and he began to experience discomfort at night. His walking distance became limited, and he found it difficult to maintain everyday activities, including walking his dog.

Despite trying a range of treatments such as medication, physiotherapy and exercise, his symptoms continued to affect his mobility and quality of life.

Assessment and diagnosis

On examination, the knee showed signs of stiffness, swelling and reduced movement. There was also a change in alignment of the leg, which can occur with more advanced arthritis.

X-rays confirmed advanced knee osteoarthritis, a condition where the joint cartilage wears down over time, leading to pain, stiffness and reduced function.

Preop Xray



Postop Xray



Exploring treatment options

As with most people experiencing knee osteoarthritis, non-surgical options were explored first. These can include:

- Pain relief medications
- Physiotherapy and strengthening exercises
- Lifestyle modifications

When symptoms continue to impact daily life despite these measures, surgery may be considered as part of an individualised treatment plan.

Treatment

After careful assessment and discussion, the patient proceeded with knee replacement surgery. This procedure involves replacing the worn surfaces of the knee joint with an artificial implant. In this case, patient-specific instruments were used to assist with surgical planning. Techniques and technologies used may vary depending on the individual and the surgeon's approach.

Following surgery, the patient participated in a supported rehabilitation program at home to assist with recovery.

Moving forward

With rehabilitation and time, the patient experienced a meaningful improvement in pain and mobility. He was able to return to many of his usual daily activities, including walking for longer distances.

Recovery experiences can vary between individuals, and outcomes depend on factors such as overall health, activity level and commitment to rehabilitation.

Understanding knee osteoarthritis

Knee osteoarthritis is a common condition, particularly in older adults. It may cause:

- Pain with movement or after activity
- Stiffness, especially after rest
- Swelling around the joint
- Reduced mobility or walking distance

Symptoms often develop gradually and can change over time.

Treatment options

Management is tailored to each person and may include a combination of approaches.

Non-surgical options

- Exercise and physiotherapy programs
- Pain relief medications
- Weight management, where appropriate
- Bracing or walking aids
- Injections for temporary symptom relief

Surgical options

- Knee replacement surgery may be considered when symptoms continue to significantly impact quality of life despite non-surgical treatment



Many people experience improved comfort and function following surgery, though recovery timelines and outcomes can vary.

Next steps

If knee pain or stiffness is affecting your daily life, support is available. Early assessment can help you understand your condition and explore suitable treatment options.

Speak with your GP about your symptoms or request a referral to an orthopaedic specialist for further assessment.

To learn more or make an enquiry, visit your nearest Healthscope hospital or specialist clinic. A personalised assessment can help guide the most appropriate next steps for your care.

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