

10/20-27/06 POST OP DAY 2-7

Starting post-op 2 I was up early and showered by myself, which upset my nurses. I just kept my operated leg outside the shower so I would not get the bandages wet. I walked in the halls with my walker. I switched to forearm crutches on post-op 3. Was given a raised toilet seat in the hospital but never used it, not even once. I wore scrubs while in the hospital because they were very comfy and easy for me to get in and out of.



Walking with crutches for the first time. Our host and flowers that Mahadeva brought me.

My daughter went out several times with Bob, Audrey's husband, while she and I were still in the hospital. They found a Pizza Hut and a Subway subs and brought us back treats. My blood count was pretty low and it made me feel very weak. I did venture out several times a day to walk and of course to do my PT. The therapists taught me how to go up and down stairs...takes a bit of coordination but it went well. We even had Movie Night at in Audrey's room. We watched "Click" and Bob popped popcorn for us. I will always remember our time with Audrey and Bob! Mahadeva came back to visit us, very nice of him!!



Me and Mahadeva (with a friend) visiting with Audrey. Me with Dr. Bis and Audrey

Getting the TEDS on was a challenge. The sisters insisted on helping me. I also had Jessie to help but I still managed to get them on and off myself the majority of the time. I also brought my own KNEE high TEDS and the hospital gives you thigh-highs. After discharge I used only the knee highs...

Dr. Bose was aware of this; much easier to deal with. I wore them on the trip there and back because the long flight puts everyone at risk for DVT.

Had steri-strips (not staples) and on post-op day 2 have been showering with a tegaderm dressing. Never had any swelling or bruising just incision soreness. I had Lovenox injections for 7 days then aspirin (81 mg) daily for a month. I was also on iron for a month for anemia. I wore my TEDS every night to bed but didn't wear them when I was out walking around (not suggesting anyone try this). I broke the 90 degree rule everyday; it's a good thing that Dr. Bose doesn't impose that restriction on us.



Pills were given with a special kit (how cute). My first post-op BHR x-ray (how cute).

10/27/06 DISCHARGE DAY

I could have been discharged on the 6th day after surgery but due to the Devalli holiday I insisted that Dr. Bose not come in to see me so he could spend time with his family instead. We had our laundry done before we left and then off we went!

IDEAL BEACH RESORT

We checked into the Ideal Beach resort, which is located in Mahaballipuram (about 30 miles south of Chennai) for a couple of days. There have been other hippies who have stayed there before who have said that it was a nice stay. There are also temples, shopping and other sights, plus it's on the Bay of Bengal. We shopped in their gift shop but never made it to the vendors on the beach, who are also fisherman. Many surfacehippies have interacted with them and it is one of my regrets that I didn't meet them. In fact, one of them is also a Bose hippy!! I had NEVER been out of the US or off the mainland before so price haggling was new to me!!! We don't have a big budget but want to bring things home for family and friends. I especially want to find something for my handsome 10 year old, which I miss terribly.

The Ideal was nice and had I felt better I may have had the chance to enjoy it more. We only stayed for 2 days and the left to go back to Chennai. We stayed in a cottage which was comfortable and private. There was a horrendous storm each night that knocked out the power several times. Each time we waited a few minutes and then the generator kicked on which gave us the fan and lights back but no air conditioning. We knew the electricity came back on when the air kicked on. Then in the daylight it was beautiful, hot and sunny... no rain. Jess had a facial and mahandi (art of hand painting) at the salon. As I was feeling weak still I called Jitu about getting my blood count redone once we got back to Chennai and all of a sudden I realized that I got my period... a full week early! That was going to make my blood lower!! If that wasn't the worst of it I wasn't "prepared". I had to ask Jitu what to do. He told me how to ask the front staff for a "Stay Free"...it was comical. Like I was trying to score drugs or something!! The driver who picked us up from Ideal to take us to the Residency stopped at a store on the side of the road so we can shop for supplies, per Jitu's instruction.



Ideal Beach Resort on Post-Op Day 7 with my daughter Jessica.

RESIDENCY TOWERS

We arrived at the Residency Towers and immediately we were at home. The Residency is like a little city in itself! We loved the activity and the atmosphere. We knew that Audrey and Bob were there and we could not wait to meet up with them again since we left the hospital. We had dinner with them and then breakfast the next morning. We were staying but they were going to the Ideal for the next week. Jess is happy that we had 24/7 wireless internet again so she could talk to her b-friend at home. In fact we had a really good setup with web cams on both sides of the world. We could see and talk to everyone at home for free! We never called the US the whole time we were in India. This was bad though because when I saw my son, Dylan (then 10) I would cry my eyes out. I missed him so much!! I also don't know how I managed without my dear husband, David. He was home keeping the fort going. While at the hotel we met a gentleman who was not a surfacehippy but he was a BOSE hippy....we recognized each other immediately by the forearm crutches. We were not lonely, ever!!



Residency Towers. Me with Audrey and Bob. Bob took Jessie to Spencer's and to Pizza Hut and Subway!!



Spencer's Plaza

Across from the Residency is Pondy Bazaar, which we never made it to but when we wanted to go shopping we got a cab (arranged by the hotel and charged to our room) and went to Spencer's Plaza. Spencer's is like a modern mall and you can find jewelry from inexpensive on up. Just beware that everyone will want to sell to you and you will need to haggle, or talk the prices down. Unless you were with a local, I would stay away from stand-alone places as they really try to pressure you to buy.

So far we have enjoyed it here in India and really love the Indian people. Everyone we have interacted with has been very friendly and helpful. We have found that every waiter, every worker in the hotel and all the other people we did business with were genuinely nice. You can see the pride in their work. Not like many of those we are used to in the US....It's refreshing.

The Trip Home

We flew economy class home but wanted to upgrade to business class for the trip home. I asked Jitu to help me arrange this but it would be too expensive. We were not able to get a bulkhead seat either on Air India. Apparently these seats are reserved for parents with infants. They provide a hanging bassinet for the trip so I settled for an aisle seat on left side of the plane so I could stretch my right hip. You cannot pre-reserve a seat and it is done at check-in. We flew from Chennai to Mumbai (1 hour 25 minutes) then the same Air India Plane for 19 hours with a stop in Paris (but we don't deplane). From there we flew to Newark. The way back was very tedious. I wore my TEDS, took my aspirin, drank lots of water and had no alcohol to avoid dehydration and putting myself at higher risk for DVT. I had to stow my crutches in the bin so I used the seat backs to walk. While sitting I kept my feet and ankles moving and I stood up every 30 minutes to walk. I did my PT exercises in the aisles.



Food on Air India

This Air India flight didn't have the cool GPS map on the seats in front of us like the way over and it was difficult to know where we were and how much longer we had. We were crossing time zones and we didn't know if it was day or night since they keep the shades down between meal times. It was very turbulent coming over the Atlantic and I was glad that Jess slept through most of it. It's funny because in the US the captain puts the seatbelt sign on for one small bump. Air India lets you walk around during turbulence until it is severe. For a jumbo jet it sure was rough!! Finally, we started our descent into Newark. The landing was very rough and we seemed to bounce down the runway!! Oddly, I wasn't nervous at all. I was so happy to get back to the US. Soon I would see my husband and my son!!! Newark airport is huge!! There were so many people getting off the plane waiting for a wheelchair that Jess and I just decided to go on foot. We rented a cart for our bags, which had to be claimed and rechecked at Continental. That's Homeland Security for you!! Then, we had to check into Continental at the ticket counter which was packed!! We were in danger of missing our connecting flight. I was still on crutches even though I asked for a wheelchair. We finally got our boarding passes and now onto security. I knew this would take a while with my new hardware. Also since I was not in a wheelchair I could not just go to the front of the line!! By the time we got to our gate we were boarding already!! The flight was comfortable but seemed too long....guess I was anxious to get home. We finally landed in

Orlando and I was SOOOO happy to be home!! It was 9pm by the time we got to baggage claim. My son and Jess's b-friend were there while my husband was circling around. I cried when I got to hug and kiss my hubby and son, Dylan! I held my son for the rest of the trip home.

As soon as I got home I took off my bandage and got into the shower; my first shower without a bandage. I peeled off the remaining steri-strips. I felt great, exhausted but great! We made it!!!

Recovery

I went back to work at 2.5 weeks post-op and started driving at 3 weeks after surgery. I ditched my last crutch at 3.5 weeks as I was only using it at the end of the day to prevent limping due to hip soreness/fatigue. I was careful to NOT limp so that I could un-do my habit of limping. It was weird because for the longest time I seemed to have forgotten how to walk. I just remembered Alan saying place on foot in front of the other, heel, toe, heel, toe. Sounds simple enough but it does take practice. It was a while before I got my natural gait back.

Starting at 5 weeks I started back on my elliptical trainer. I reduced the stride to 12" and started at resistance level 1 for 15 minutes. That only lasted a few days until I was back to my pre-op 18" stride and I'm slowly building my resistance and time. I was up to 20 minutes at level 2 for a couple of weeks and even though I didn't break a sweat I took it conservatively and built slowly. I do not have a physical therapist nor do I think I need one. I really like the exercise video clips on the McMinn website and this is how I've been rehabbing. I had a mild hip dysplasia that caused me to walk with my right foot pointing right and that was totally corrected. It's weird to see both feet point straight ahead as I walk.

I have had ZERO pain or discomfort in the hip joint since I woke up from anesthesia and only had the obligatory butt soreness and incision sensitivity. I could sleep for short periods on my right side for a while before I could tolerate it for any real length of time. I bought a zero gravity chair but rarely sat in it (my 10 year old son uses it as a gaming chair). At 8 weeks post-op I did my follow-up x-rays and e-mailed them to Dr. Bose. I also took pictures of my incision to show him as well. He was very pleased with my recovery.



I'm still doing great! I still tend to over-do it and then suffer with sore muscles for a couple of days. Guess that's my body's way of telling to slow down. My 8 week follow up x-rays were perfect, according to Dr. Bose. He tells me to stay within my comfort zone for 3 to 4 months then I can push it as I please. 3 times since surgery I overdid my workouts and strained my lower back, which then aggravated my sciatic nerve. Dr. Bose said that it wasn't necessary to keep rehabbing my hip and to concentrate on "peri-spinal" exercises. I had worked up to the max on my elliptical and pushed way too hard. I had no problem cardiovascularly but my back, now realigned and not compensating for limping, is vulnerable.

One thing that I have learned from being a surface hippy member is that everyone recovers differently. It heavily depends on several factors including the severity of hip problems before surgery, the type and

extent of surgery and the post-op protocols and restrictions of each surgeon. I gauge my progress on others' accounts but I don't try to keep up with those who are ahead of schedule. I judge my progress on my own and proceed as I can tolerate. I have to confess that I'm nervous that I'll do something stupid or that something will go wrong with my BHR so I'll try not push it beyond my limits, at least for now.

My ROM is back to normal (just about) and I truly feel that I have my life back. I felt what it was like to be handicapped and now that I'm not I appreciate things so much more now!! I owe my life to Dr. Bose, Dr. Bis and his whole team and to surfacehippy as well!!!



That's my story and I'm sticking to it....

Recommendations

I would recommend shorts, tees and track or sweat type pants. Remember you'll be wearing TED stockings and wearing shorts with them is soooo cute! The majority of us Bose hippies did not experience very much swelling, if at all, so I won't be necessary to bring pants much larger than your normal size. Be aware of the airline restrictions with carry-ons. I was able to get aisle seats and requested a lot of water to drink during the long flights. I got up frequently and moving my feet and ankles around while sitting, which prepared me for the long post-op flight. I did bring my 18 year-old daughter so I had her to keep me company but I could have managed alone.

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