

Shoulder Preservation

At the end of March I had surgery to repair a torn tendon in my right shoulder. Progress has been good and the shoulder was more comfortable within a week than it had been for months.

My left hand has learnt to participate more – it has even become a bit skillful with some activities. Four-year-old grandson was very pleased, “Your writing looks just like mine, Nan!”

By week three I could knit – all those years of knitting under the desk at school, with no visible upper arm movement, finally paid off! Week five I could do the ironing (I got over THAT excitement quite quickly). Week six I was driving again and Ross could retire from chauffeur duties.

Reality is that the ageing process is making joints and joining bits in our bodies less elastic and more vulnerable. The way I tore my supra spinatus tendon is apparently a very common story. The car was parked tightly, I reached forward to open the front door and as I opened the arm out wide and took the weight, I felt the snap in my shoulder. That was last July. When I finally got to the surgeon in Feb, he said it's a bit like a tear in the curtain; everyone going past touches it, so it doesn't get smaller or go away.

This type of injury happens to the young also - we all need a wake-up call.

Lessons Learnt?

I'd much rather be making quilts than sitting around, so here is my new set of rules for myself ...

- If you feel that snap, and it's sore, seek expert advice – sooner rather than later
- You may have done something a particular way for years but it's now time to THINK FIRST, then do
- Be back aware – when you pick things up: bend your knees, keep your back upright and support the weight through your legs
- Be neck aware – when you do long sessions at the computer or machine quilting, take regular breaks and do some neck and back flexing exercises / stretches
- Be shoulder aware – stand square-on for lifting; two hands are better than one, even for light things
- DON'T reach around to get things in the back seat of the car, or to swat a recalcitrant child/grandchild
- DON'T fall over
- Talk to the professionals. Ask questions about the 'DOs & DON'Ts'
- Pay someone else to do the vacuuming!

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