

Disco skater rolls again with new knee

Disco roller skating, hardcore badminton, and hiking are a few of 65-year-old Laurel Harrington's favorite activities. But after tearing her meniscus (cartilage in the knee) playing badminton several years ago, on top of existing arthritis, knee pain was keeping her from the activities she most enjoyed. "I tried various treatments and each one helped for a while. But nothing gave me lasting relief," she says.

When Harrington learned she was a candidate for Kaiser Permanente's innovative outpatient knee replacement surgery, she decided to go for it. The program combines education that helps prepare patients for surgery, self-management of pain after the surgery through use of a medication pump, and home health services like physical therapy. Outpatient surgery is an option for some healthy, active adults.

The outpatient program was launched in 2018 and has received positive feedback from patients, almost all of whom have returned to their normal activities. "The feedback reflects the success of this program," says Tom Stoll, MD, head of Kaiser Permanente's Orthopedic Department. "We're looking forward to making outpatient surgery available to more and more patients in the future."

It usually takes about a year to see the full benefits of a new joint, but recovery progressed quickly for Harrington. "My surgery was in January 2019, and by March I was back to disco roller skating.



A new knee helped Laurel Harrington get back to her favorite activities.

"My surgery was in January 2019 and by March I was back to roller skating."

By April I was playing badminton, and in May I did an 8.5-mile mountain hike. Now I'm able to do everything I enjoyed before my knee problems."

Kaiser Permanente's orthopedic expertise includes treatment for a wide range of injuries – Achilles tendon repair, ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) reconstruction, meniscal transplants, and hip arthroscopy, to name just a few. Our orthopedic teams include physicians, physician assistants, surgeons, nurses, physical therapists, and other specialists, all working together to help you get back to the activities and life you love. ■