



Replacing Old Joints Can Improve Your Love Life

Boomers are discovering the side effects of getting new hips or knees: better sex

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A headline in this week's Science section of The New York Times grabbed my attention, as it would any boomer: "Surprise Path to Better Sex: Hip Surgery," it read. The article was filled with testimonials from people over 50 who've had joint replacements and are now getting it on.

I've got to hand it to my generation. We keep finding new ways to not let our aging bodies stop us from having fun.

A Manhattan magazine publisher said of her new hip, "It definitely improved my quality of life and my love life." No wonder hip replacement surgery has risen 85 percent in the past decade. The number of boomers having the surgery has tripled in the same period, the Times reported. (So too knee surgery, according to another article I just read.)

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A New York real estate agent told the Times that six months after her hip surgery her physician thought she still needed to improve the flexibility of the new joint. So he wrote her a prescription that said, "Get a boyfriend." She went right to the love pharmacy and got it filled. She's now in an intimate relationship. "With the new hip, I felt like I was 40 years old," she said.

After getting new joints, "Many boomers reported an increase in libido and stamina and an improvement in their ability to climax," the article said.

Suddenly it's clear to me why boomers have discovered online dating sites. They're joining them at twice the rate of any other age group.

An orthopedic surgeon at New York University's Langone Medical Center told the Times she was getting so many questions from patients about intimacy after joint replacement that she added a page to her website devoted to sex. "That page gets the most hits of any page on my website," said Dr. Claudette Lajam, whose name sounds like it came from a romance novel.

I had to check it out.

On her website, called Orthochick, Lajam tells the story of an elderly farmer she was treating at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. He had an arthritic hip and refused to have it replaced. Then during one of his visits he eagerly requested the next available surgery date. Lajam asked what motivated the change of heart. He told her that he and his wife had discovered Viagra.

"The moral of the story: With the availability of medication to enhance sexual function," Lajam writes, "older people are rediscovering their sexual relationships with their partner. ... With knee replacement, most people can return to their former sexual activities and positions."

Her site includes drawings of sexual positions for people lucky enough to get lucky after hip replacement surgery. It has been years since I could do No. 3. I envy those people with new hips.

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I've always figured my best chance at scoring is to stay strong. It's a lot of work, what with going to the gym, dieting and eating wild salmon.

Why do I bother?

I should just let my body go and get replacement parts instead.

Newer joints would give me more energy and stamina for years to come. In six months I get Medicare. Besides brand new hips and knees, I'll be able to afford new shoulders, ankles, elbows and knuckles, if there are any left. And who knows what future orthopedic catalogs will be carrying: Toes, wrists, pecs, spines, feet, fingers, skull? I should pre-order now.

I'll be so flexible I'll be able to master the *Kama Sutra*.

But having so many body parts made of plastic and metal also comes with a side effect: I won't be able to feel a thing.

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