**It’s been a year!!**

Over the holidays I missed my one-year anniversary of my new knee. December 17 was the date. It’s been an interesting year of learning for me. From the minutes, to days, to months, to year, this journey has been well worth the hard work.

First and foremost, it’s awesome! When it’s time! That is the most important part of the equation; ‘when it’s time.’ When you’ve exhausted all other forms of therapies, supplemental injections and have reached complete frustration with your loss of abilities. Then it’s time.

Fortunately, we’ve come to a point in the medical world of joint replacement where they honor ‘need’ above ‘age.’ Thank goodness, because I couldn’t have lasted another decade with that crooked, painful knee of mine.

The first thing I can say, after a year, is that I love my new knee and I only wish I had done it 4-6 years prior.

Day of surgery is hard. Just knowing that you are going under the anesthesia and being cut open and parts of you are being disposed of while others are being added. It’s truly a mind trip. So never discount a person’s concern or worries about what’s happening within that 3-5-hour surgery.

First week is totally awful. Spending even a single night in the hospital ranks high on my awful list. To spend two nights in the hospital working through the after-surgery pain and the meds you need to control it, is just rotten. There are so many people that make these initial nights O.K. and embracing these people is the only way to be ready enough to go home and get on with life.

First month. Not awful. But challenging. Mostly about taking those independent steps and making those initial moves back into your active world. I’m remembering those fears of falling and tweaking the knee and all those terrible thoughts of messing it all up after I’ve spent so much time wanting and so much money getting. I thought about every step that I took every moment of the day. The steps into my house, the steps into my bathroom and making sure to rotate into my bed properly without allowing the sheets and comforter to hurt me. Did I say ice? Still one of the miracle treatments after surgery, never enough ice. This first month feels like forever.

Months two through four. I hate/love my physical therapists. Holy ow! I never respected a physical therapists’ skills until they were applied on me, during my knee replacement rehabilitation. Begging, crying, threatening did absolutely nothing to ease the discomfort they applied to my knee as we insisted that this knee recover with its best opportunity. I never knew that physical therapists could be so mean/nice. It’s one of those love/hate relationships. These same first few months, I also found myself a little fearful. I ended up with a rogue stitch in my sutures that became infected. Knowing how serious infection can be for a new joint, I found myself very uneasy with its healing, until it healed. Fortunately, the stitch cleared itself and eventually healed without concern. Unfortunately, the infection caused a little deeper scarring.

As told by my physician (and others) the first three to six months are really the toughest. It took me at least six months to realize that I wasn’t always thinking about my knee and steps and the terrain I was about to walk on. I will say, honestly, that once the initial healing pain was over and if I hadn’t done therapy or had exercised, my knee was pain free. It was a dream come true.

Six to nine months I became completely pain free. I was doing everything without thought or concerns. Even went on my first hike with my favorite daughter!

In September, I was teaching a strength and tone class, where I found myself in the child pose (yoga) without realizing that I had used this transitional stretch/pose. I did it without pain, without thought and without hesitation. It had been years since I could pull back into that stretch!

With patience, therapy and hard work; joint replacement will be worth it. If you are ready and if it’s time.