

# Fit and free . from pain

We all need to take more exercise but this can lead to wear and tear. Max Fehily explains how he can help

**H**owever fit we feel and whatever we do to keep in shape, most of us will find our bodies suffering wear and tear as we get older.

Aches and pains are a small price to pay for the terrific feeling you get from being fit. But sometimes, you need more than a relaxing bath.

That's when you might need the services of Max Fehily, a consultant orthopaedic surgeon who specialises in minimally invasive hip surgery and replacements.

Mr Fehily is part of BOSS, Bolton Orthopaedic and Sports Surgery, a team of nine local consultant orthopaedic surgeons who offer a comprehensive service for patients with bone, joint and sports injury problems.

BOSS is able to offer prompt, expert assessment and planned treatment for all orthopaedic conditions from the elite sportsmen to 'weekend warriors'.

He regularly performs hip arthroscopy (keyhole) and has designed a comprehensive rehabilitation program to complement that surgery

He answers questions regularly posed by patients:

**Q.** I have always been sporty and regularly go running as well as work out in the gym. I have noticed that whenever I exercise, I get a deep pain in my groin. What does it mean? I feel too well to have arthritis in my hip.

**A.** It is possible to develop cartilage injuries in the hip, in the same way that people do in the knee or shoulder. Recent research has shown that people can have a bony overgrowth on either the ball or socket of their hip (hip impingement) and in time this can cause damage to the joint. It tends to occur in active people, often with repetitive sports that involve deep bending, like running, horse riding or cycling. As time goes on, it can cause inflammation in and around the hip, and patients can present with recurrent groin strain or pain on the side of the hip.

**Q.** If I go to my GP will he be able to detect the problem?

**A.** GPs are increasingly becoming more aware of the condition and if they suspect hip impingement, can refer the patient on for specialist opinion. In my experience, most patients are picked up by experienced physiotherapists who have been treating the patient for recurrent groin strains.

**Q.** What investigations will I need?

**A.** Unfortunately x-rays can look normal in the early stages so special scans such as magnetic resonance and CT will often be needed to make an accurate diagnosis

**Q.** Will I need surgery?

**A.** If the scans show a definite cartilage injury, it is generally better to undergo surgery followed by a focused rehabilitation programme.

**Q.** Does it involve a big operation?

**A.** The hip is a much more difficult joint to access than the knee or shoulder and traditionally it would have meant a big scar and a considerable time in hospital. However, with newer techniques, it can now be done through key-hole surgery (Hip Arthroscopy) and usually the patient will go home on the same day or the following morning. During the operation, the cartilage is



repaired or trimmed back, depending on the size of the tear and any bony overgrowth is shaved back using special instruments.

**Q.** How long will it take to recover?

**A.** While the operation is done as a day case procedure, most people will return to work at around six weeks but may still need further rehabilitation and may not return to full sport for between three and six months.

**Q.** What if the tests show some arthritis in my hip?

**A.** If there is significant arthritis then keyhole hip surgery may not be possible. In that case a total hip replacement may be recommended. The use of newer techniques and specially designed implants mean that people can lead a very active life with an artificial hip, often taking part in a variety of sports such as golf, tennis, cycling and skiing.

#### How to contact us

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