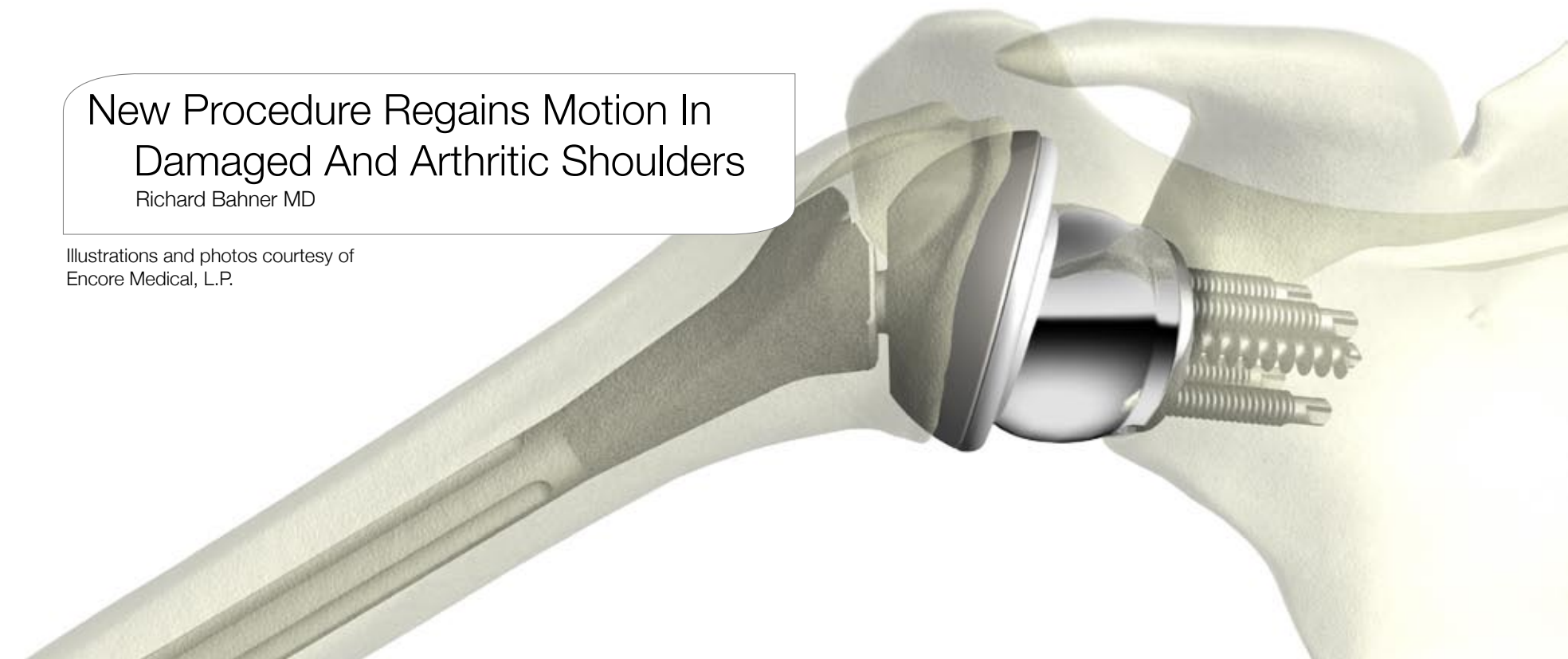


New Procedure Regains Motion In Damaged And Arthritic Shoulders

Richard Bahner MD

Illustrations and photos courtesy of Encore Medical, L.P.



The reverse shoulder arthroplasty is an exciting new procedure that can diminish pain and improve function and range of motion in people suffering from severe arthritis of the shoulder and irreparably torn rotator cuff muscles.



Arthritis of the shoulder joint, as hip or knee arthritis, can occur for many different reasons. "Wear and tear" or osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, post-traumatic arthritis

to name a few, limit the function of a joint and cause varying degrees and types of pain. As it progresses, arthritis in the shoulder limits the ability to dress, groom and lift or carry objects.

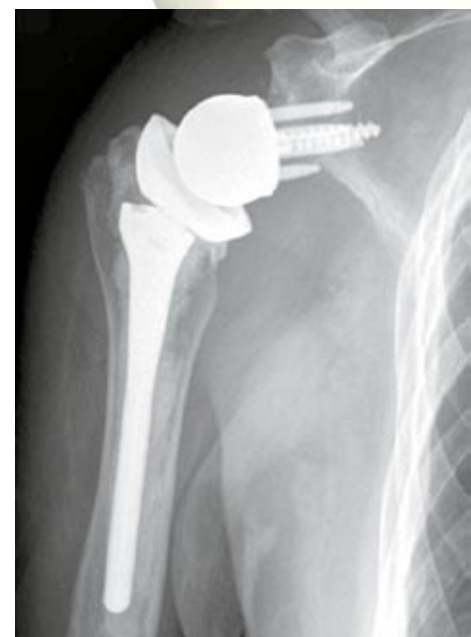
Traditional shoulder replacement rebuilds the ball and socket anatomy of the shoulder joint and is performed over 12,000 times a year in the US. The shoulder is designed like a golf ball fitting on a golf tee. The golf ball represents the ball at the top of the upper arm, the humerus, and the tee represents the indented area in the shoulder blade, the glenoid. The ball is held in the middle of the tee and moves around the tee with the help of the rotator cuff muscles. These rotator cuff muscles help rotate the ball and center the ball in the socket. Through a tremendous range of motion an example of the shoulder joint working well is a pitcher contorting his arm to throw a ball. The rotator cuff muscles are vulnerable and susceptible to injury and tearing especially with age. Torn rotator cuff muscles can cause and lead to significant shoulder pain and disability.

Severe rotator cuff tears can often progress to significant shoulder arthritis and with the arthritis pain, loss of lifting and use of the arm. Until the reverse shoulder prosthesis, which has been used for the past ten years in Europe, glenohumeral arthritis with

irreparable rotator cuff tears were considered an insolvable problem.

Reverse shoulder replacement is a procedure designed to give pain relief. Improved function frequently occurs because the large and powerful deltoid muscle is put to use. This procedure can potentially help people with a rotator cuff deficient shoulder and severe arthritis or those who have failed traditional shoulder replacement or failed rotator cuff surgery. It is designed indeed as a reverse procedure. The prosthesis reverses the normal positions of the ball and socket. The upper arm is replaced with an implant that has a socket in which the ball rests and the normal socket is replaced with a metal prosthetic ball. Surrounding muscles that are not torn are now optimized to contribute to shoulder function.

As this is a major surgical procedure, preoperative education and preparation should be discussed between the surgeon and patient which will help to avoid unnecessary complications. With appropriate rest and subsequent physical therapy, recovery takes 3 to 6 months.



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