



Mike “Coach K” Krzyzewski, Duke University Men’s Basketball Coach and Bilateral Hip Replacement Patient

Mike Krzyzewski (Coach K), 67, is known for being the winningest coach in men’s college basketball history. Not only is he the head coach at Duke University, he was the coach of the 2008 and 2012 U.S. Olympic Gold Medal winning teams and has been named the head coach of the 2016 U.S. National team. However, in 1999, osteoarthritis (OA) pain put his coaching career at risk.

Coach K first experienced pain and discomfort in his left hip due to OA during the 1994 basketball season. Over the next five years, the pain worsened and by 1999, at the age of 52, Coach K was walking with a limp and coaching games from a chair – a troublesome sight to those who had grown accustomed to seeing his active and energetic coaching style. Despite a successful season, Coach K’s debilitating pain forced him to contemplate the unthinkable: an early retirement from the game he loved.

Coach K considered hip replacement, but kept putting it off. He thought he couldn’t afford to take the time off to have the surgery because he didn’t want to miss a season, but he admits his joint pain was draining his energy so much that he wasn’t able to bring his best to the court. As time passed, despite daily medications and physical therapy, he knew his options were either to have surgery or stop coaching. After consulting with his orthopaedic surgeon, Coach K had his left hip replaced in April 1999 with a *DePuy Synthes Companies* hip replacement and he was back to his regular activities after two months of rehabilitation. In 2001, he led Duke University to its third NCAA® national championship, further solidifying his reputation as the winningest coach in Division I men’s college basketball.

A couple of years later, after experiencing similar symptoms in his right hip, Coach K had his other hip replaced, also with a *DePuy Synthes Companies* hip replacement. But this time he knew what a difference his first hip replacement had made, and he didn’t wait as long to seek treatment. He underwent a successful operation and rehabilitation program, and that same year led his team to Duke University’s fifth consecutive ACC Tournament championship and the school’s sixth consecutive appearance in the NCAA Sweet 16®.

Looking back on his decision to have hip replacement surgery, Coach K said he wishes that he’d made the decision to have his first surgery sooner because his OA drained his energy and almost cost him his coaching career. He realizes that during this period in his life, he wasn’t at his best because he was using his energy to fight his condition rather than focusing on his family and career. Everything from his physical ability, to his mood and concentration was impacted by his daily fight with OA.

After his joint replacement surgery, Coach K says his players noticed improvements not only in his mobility, but also his mood and the energy he brought to the court. And, according to one of his daughters, there’s no question that joint replacement has made Coach K a more energetic, happier person.

In addition to coaching basketball, Coach K has authored several books about his holistic approach to building successful teams and inspiring people to achieve greatness, both on and off the court.

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