



## My new hips have lasted 54 years

Victor Small, 82, says he is living proof that hip replacements can be long-lasting. Between them, his pair of implants have lasted him more than half a century.

"They're still working perfectly okay after more than half a century, which must be some sort of record," he said.

Mr Small is one of about 70,000 people who receive a new hip each year.

His problems started in 1968 when he was just 46 years old. A keen cricketer and gardener, Victor was very active and had not experienced any problems until one day when he bent over to pick something up and felt his right hip lock.

Over the next few weeks his leg became stiff and painful, making it hard for him to walk. His workmates noticed he had developed a limp.

"They used to ask me if I had stones in my shoe," Victor recalled. "Without realising, I had begun to walk with a limp because my hip was so painful."

His doctor sent him for a number of tests, which revealed that he had osteoarthritis - a progressive disease of the joints.

At the time, he was reluctant to have a hip replacement because he was told that they only lasted for about eight years.

### Long-lasting

To buy him more time he had a procedure called an osteotomy, where a wedge of bone is removed from the damaged joint to shift the stress and strain to another, undamaged part of the joint.

But after a few years his symptoms returned and he and his doctors decided a total hip replacement would be the best treatment.

"I went into hospital on the Tuesday, had the operation on Thursday and was walking on Monday," Victor said.

With his new right hip working well, Victor then began to experience pain and stiffness in his left



Victor Small said his new hips made an amazing difference to his life

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## My new hips have lasted 54 years... (cont'd)

hip about 10 years later in 1984 and so he decided to have this hip replaced as well.

Again, he made a quick recovery and was able to get back to work as a store man until he retired at the age of 63.

Victor has had his right hip replacement for nearly 33 years and his left replacement for 21.

"When I had the first operation, I thought it would just postpone me ending up in a wheelchair. I thought it was temporary. Thirty-three years later and I am still on my feet."

There are more than 60 types of replacement hips available. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence says that 90% of hip implants should last for at least 10 years.

A long-term study of the replacement that Mr Smith received - the Exeter hip - has shown that they can last much longer than this.

Of 34 given to 27 patients between 1970 and 1975, only three needed to be replaced a second time because of wear and tear, found researchers working at the Princess Elizabeth Orthopaedic Centre in Exeter where the implant was designed in 1969.

Mr Richard Kerry, consultant orthopaedic surgeon at the Northern General Hospital in Sheffield, said: "This is sound data. The Exeter hip has been out there for a long time and has very good results.

"There are other hips on the market that should have similar results, but there are very few, if any, hips that have superior published data."

He said more and more replacements were being performed in younger people after such good results. However, he said it was important that every patient realised there was a chance that the replacement might fail and that long-term success could not be guaranteed.