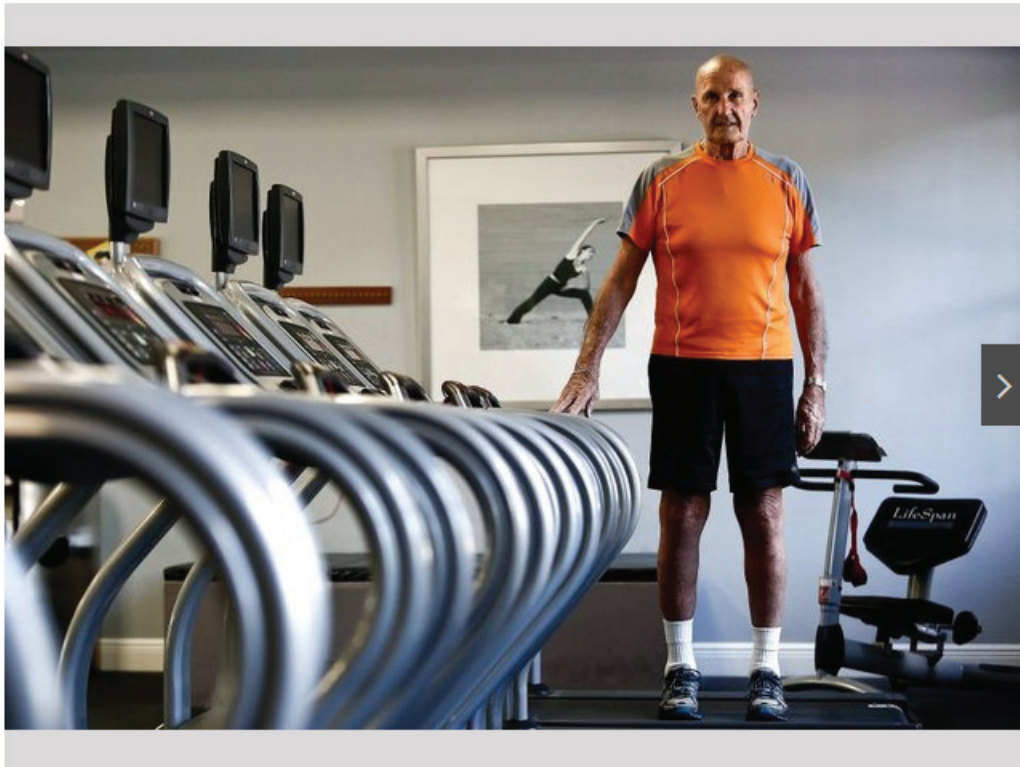


## Two new knees for Richard Marks' wedding dance

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POSTED: 4:05 AM, Dec 9, 2014

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Copyright 2014 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. Richard Marks, 77, stands for a portrait at the gym in the Palmia Golf and Country Club gym on Monday, December 1, 2014. Markshad both of his knees replaced in September and has been working on getting his knee strength back. (Scott McIntyre/Staff)

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NAPLES, Fla. - Getting down on one knee to propose led to a double knee replacement for Bonita Springs resident Richard Marks.

Marks, 77, went from jogging four miles every day and regularly playing golf to barely able to navigate around his home or to go out on casual excursions, such as shopping and dining.

After nearly two years of losing more and more quality of life, he knew the solution was to replace both knees. He found his inspiration in fiancée, Callie Kitis.

“Richard Marks was a heavy runner for years. What was so interesting about him was that he is planning to get married. He wanted to dance at his wedding. It was a big motivation for him.

“(Recently), he had his first dance, getting warmed up for his wedding,” said Dr. H. Kurtis Biggs, founder of the Naples-based Joint Replacement Institute, and the orthopedic surgeon who performed Marks’ surgery.

Kitis and Marks are to wed Jan. 10. Biggs anticipates Marks will be back to all the activities he enjoys by then.

Marks joined the growing number of people in the United States requiring total knee replacements as the baby boomer generation continues to mature.

The American Association of Orthopedic Surgeons reported the number of total knee replacements in the U.S. increased 188 percent between 2000 and 2009, the most recent data available said. Florida has the highest number of total knee replacements, second only to California, according to AAOS data.

Marks had both knees replaced in September using a new customized option in knee replacement, iTotal customized total knee replacement, made by ConforMIS, a Massachusetts-based medical device company.

Choosing this procedure was easy, Marks said. After he first heard of it, Marks attended a seminar led by Biggs, where he got all of his questions answered.

There’s one 9 a.m., Saturday at North Collier Regional Hospital.

“I had no second thoughts at all,” said Marks, of choosing to replace both knees with iTotal.

The level of customization in the ConforMIS method is what makes this knee replacement method unique. Other custom knees have only one component customized, while the ConforMIS knee customizes both the femur component and the tibia component to precisely fit the patient.

That difference is significant because it gives patients a knee that feels natural, giving them more stability.

“Usually, the problem with knees is instability because they’re not quite lined up right, they’re not quite at the right angle. So, the patient doesn’t feel steady on their feet. (iTTotal) allows for more accurate placement of the implant, so they can get back to all their activities – bowling, tennis, riding a bike – without feeling like a robot,” said Biggs.

iTTotal received FDA approval in January 2011, with limited release to surgeons in May 2011. Biggs, the exclusive user in Collier County, began using this treatment in the spring. While the customization method is new, the rest of the procedure is tried and true, said Biggs. The materials are traditional, having been used for about 60 years, and are long lasting, with knee replacements averaging about 25 years.

Other benefits of iTTotal include a decrease in the amount of bone cut, a reduced recovery time, shorter time in surgery and fewer instruments used in the operating room. That provide benefits to the hospitals, patients and doctors, said Biggs.

The only drawback is the time it takes to have the custom knee manufactured, which can be about four to six weeks, Biggs added. The manufacturer does not keep stocks of “off the shelf” knees, he said.

Recovery times and return to activities and sports vary slightly, with motivated patients such as Marks sometimes getting back faster, but overall return to activities after knee replacement are approximately:

Chipping and putting: two to three weeks

Full game of golf: four weeks

Tennis volleying, five to six weeks

Full game of tennis: eight weeks

Bowling: four to five weeks

Walking without a cane or walker: seven to eight weeks

Driving: two weeks

These approximate times of recovery and return to activity are faster than traditional knee replacements, said Biggs, because of the custom fit, more natural feel and increased range of motion faster with less pain. With traditional knee-replacement, it will take about three months before your back to playing golf.