

The Shoulder Centre at Ajax-Pickering hospital gets long-distance runner back on her feet

Scarborough resident says pain before surgery turned her life upside down

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AJAX -- Six months after shoulder surgery, Ellen Hawkins is training for a half marathon.

The former Pickering resident who now lives in Scarborough helped celebrate the official opening of the Shoulder Centre at the Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering hospital this month.

The one-stop patient-focused centre for faster diagnosis and treatment treats a wide variety of shoulder injuries such as shoulder arthritis, rotator cuff and frozen shoulder. According to the website, The Shoulder Centre commits to keep waiting lists below eight weeks for an initial visit with a shoulder expert.

"The big thing is we're just trying to change the way things work ... to serve patients and decrease costs," said orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Jesse Slade Shantz. "Hopefully we can make this a platform for other areas of medicine."

Hawkins, 67, was walking in the park with her friend in January when she slipped on black ice, chipping her ankle. But that injury was minor compared to the pain she felt in her shoulder.

"My whole life was upside down," she recalls.

It hurt Hawkins to drive, and to brush her hair so much that she got it cut short so she wouldn't have to anymore.

"I couldn't sleep," she says. "That was the worst part."

And it pained her to go the long distances she was used to running.

In March, Hawkins visited her family doctor and an ultrasound determined she tore her rotator cuff. She was referred to Dr. Stephen Gallay at The Shoulder Centre.

"I saw him within three weeks at the end of March," Hawkins says.

He booked her in for surgery for April 15.

"Sure, initially afterward it's very painful, but by July, I was finished physio," she said.



Justin Greaves / Metroland (photo above)

AJAX -- Doctors and dignitaries presided over the official ribbon cutting at the new Shoulder Centre in the Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering hospital recently. Scarborough resident Ellen Hawkins (photo at right) successfully completed the Scotiabank 5k run earlier this month with her son, Greg Hazelton, six months after her shoulder surgery. Hawkins had her surgery at the Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering hospital.

The entire staff helped her get back to normal.

"They show you what to do," she said. "I'm a driven person. I run crazy distances like half marathons and I wanted to get back to that."

She has already completed five-kilometre and 10k runs, and is working up to another half marathon. "This shoulder centre they have now is so, so important because people need to get back to where they were," she said.

For more information on the centre, visit www.theshoulder-centre.ca.



Submitted photo