

# Brave Diane shuns general anaesthetic in mind-over-matter approach to pain

by Miles Skinner

DIANE Watkins doesn't agree with the old adage about 'no gain without pain'.

She doesn't like pain, but neither does she enjoy the effects of general anaesthetic - which is why she has just undergone major surgery without it.

The 50-year-old dance and PE teacher endured bones in her shoulder being drilled and cut - with the help of psychotherapy.

Diane ignored her surgeon's advice to take a general anaesthetic, opting instead for a localised pain block, coupled with a mixture of relaxation, meditation and hypnotism techniques.

She remained conscious throughout the entire operation as psychotherapist Gordon Gatiss observed and helped her relax.

"I first met Gordon three years ago, when we enlisted his help for our daughter who was

suffering from severe panic attacks," Diane said.

"He was incredible and helped her to regain control of her life. She is now a successful musician studying at the Royal Northern College of Music."

Diane's operation was a sub-acromial decompression, which involves removing bone from the clavicle and scapula.

"I did not want to have general anaesthetic, as in the past it made me sick for days and left me depressed for months, so I asked Gordon if he would help me go through the operation under hypnosis," she added.

Prior to the operation, Diane had four sessions with Gordon, who took her through his processes of meditation and relaxation.

"The surgeon seemed a bit nervous when I told him that I didn't want a general anaesthetic," she said.

"But he was very supportive and Gordon was allowed into the operating theatre.

"I was encouraged by the surgeon to have a pain block (local anaesthetic) injected into my shoulder to dull the pain, and I agreed.

"Then Gordon helped put me in a state of relaxation and carefully monitored my vital signs."

The procedure was not without stress and trauma - with drills whirring and pressure as the surgeon made his incisions.

Diane, who was head of Dance at Marple Hall School for 10 years, added: "I was able to stay in control and relaxed throughout, with Gordon's help.

"After the operation, apart from the obvious localised pain, I felt fantastic. My recovery rate was amazing."

Three days after the operation Diane felt well enough to visit her gym for a light workout.



DIANE Watkins

Despite the surgeon's suggestion that she could need four to six weeks off work, Diane returned to work after a fortnight.

"I would definitely do it again. Everyone, including my surgeon, is amazed at my rate of recovery, and there are definitely no side effects," she said.