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NAME	Mark Tuck
AGE	49
HOBBIES	Off-road racing, skydiving and adventure enthusiast

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## Adventure enthusiast walks straight again following life-changing surgery.

### PROBLEM

49-year old Project Manager Mark Tuck was experiencing acute low back pain that left him hunched and unable to walk more than 10 metres. The avid off-road racer, skydiver and adventure enthusiast who was used to a physically active life was left bent double walking with a stick. He was unable to walk straight or sleep lying down, and the excruciating pain began affecting his sleep, mental health and social life, and took away his ability to work. Mark said: "After nearly a year of intense pain in the lower back during and after activities, I couldn't concentrate and had to be signed off work as increased amounts of pain medication made it impossible to function in my position. I was also extremely conscious of how I looked doubled over walking with a stick, which affected my mental health."

### DIAGNOSIS

Mark was diagnosed with spinal stenosis – a narrowing of the spaces within your spine that places extra pressure on the spinal cord and nerves – after experiencing back pain for nearly a year, which progressively worsened in the 8 debilitating weeks prior to his surgery. The condition, which mostly occurs in those over the age of 50, is more commonly caused by gradual 'wear-and-tear' changes in the spine occurring in the lower back or neck. In many cases, patients with spinal stenosis experience no pain at rest or any weakness.

### TREATMENT

Mark was seen by Spinal Consultant Mr Am Rai, who heads the London Norwich Spine Clinic, under whose care he underwent minimally invasive keyhole spinal surgery to relieve the pressure on his spinal nerves. Mr Rai explains that Mark's body had adapted itself by bending forward in an attempt to take pressure off the nerves – something that he is starting to see more often with an ageing population. The hourlong operation required only a tiny cut and results in minimal damage to the soft tissue and bones. For Mark, it proved life-changing.

### RESULT

Today Mark can quite literally hold his head high and walk straight again following the life-changing spinal surgery. Now pain free, he can walk again and sleep lying down and is already looking forward to returning to work and taking part in sport once more ahead of his future.



**Mark's reaction:** "Literally the next morning after surgery I could stand pain-free and straight. One week after surgery and I'm now taking 30-minute walks along the beach. It has been remarkable and life-changing. I'm so relieved that I feel and look more normal, and I can now see a real chance to get back to work and sport."

**Mr Am Rai works from St John's & St Elizabeth Hospital, St Johns Wood, London and Spire Norwich Hospital, Norwich. He treats a wide range of problems, such as disc herniations in the neck and lower back, spinal deformities such as scoliosis and kyphosis in adults and children, plus trauma, infections and tumours.**