



Submitted photo / Tom Jones
Orthopedic surgeon Dr. Tom Jones wears augmented reality glasses as he prepares to do a total joint replacement surgery in April.



Submitted photo / Trumbull Regional Medical Center
Brothers Ken Jones, M.D., and Tom Jones, M.D., are board-certified orthopedic surgeons at Trumbull Regional Medical Center.

MADE TO LAST

Trumbull Regional's nine-surgeon team performs about 500 total hip and knee replacements a year.

"Once you wear out your joints, you can't rebuild them," Jones said, adding he's seen an increase in the need for total joint replacements. Arthritis is the main culprit behind the destruction of joints — and obesity and trauma are the main causes of arthritis, Jones said.

Repetitive motion or exercises like walking or running are less of a cause of joint wear than one would think, he added.

Jones has done total joint replacements for patients in their early 30s. He also sees a lot of patients in their 40s and 50s — and that's not too young for a replacement, because Trumbull Regional uses implants that will last around 50 years. That's longer than some other joint replacement centers that use less expensive but lower quality implants, Jones said.

On the opposite end, Jones' oldest patient was 102. "She lived alone, did her own grocery shopping, did her own banks accounts," Jones said of that patient. "Her knee was horribly deformed. (The surgery) allowed her to remain independent for another three years."

COMPREHENSIVE CARE

The total joint replacement process at Trumbull Regional begins well before the surgery, with the orthopedic team communicating with a patient's primary care physician. The patient and her or his family participate in a program that lets them know what to expect pre- and post-surgery.

"I like that we involve the families because they're critical in making sure that the patients know what they're supposed to do when they go home," said Peggy Rable, a registered nurse who is the orthopedic patient navigator.

Patients arrive at the hospital several hours before their surgery, Jones said.

"Then after the surgery, patients get out of bed and start therapy as soon as the (anesthesia) wears off," Jones said.

The goal is four hours after recovery.

The travel-themed rooms in the Center for Joint Replacement are private with their own bathrooms, but patients generally don't stay in them long. From the time a joint replacement patient walks in the door for surgery, she or he will usually spend about 24 hours at Trumbull Regional.

While care is customized and rooms are private, patients do participate in group therapy — which can turn into a competition, Rable said.

"Say you're 40 and you see the little 90-year-old doing much better than you — you're going to up your game a little bit," Rable said.

More than 90 percent of total joint replacement patients go home after their stay instead of going to a rehab facility, she said.

Everyone is assigned homework — exercises to get their mobility back.

"We want them to move," Rable said. "In most cases, what they think when they have surgery is that they're going to go home and sit and kind of just take it easy. Yes, they're going to take it easy, but it's stressed to them that they need to get up every hour during the day and do their exercises."

Rable said it can be painful, but it's worth it. Oftentimes patients see such success with one joint replacement that they come back for another.



Submitted photo / Trumbull Regional Medical Center
William Wear, physical therapy assistant in the Center for Joint Replacement at Trumbull Regional Medical Center, assists with a group therapy session.

EXCELLENCE

People often think they need to go to Cleveland to get quality care orthopedic care, but that's not true, Rable said.

"I have to really sell it and say, 'No, you can come right here.' And then, when they do, they're really, really happy," Rable said.

Trumbull Regional was the first hospital in Ohio and the second in the nation to achieve the Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval for Advanced Certification in Total Hip and Total Knee Replacement in 2016. Jefferson Hospital in Philadelphia beat Trumbull by just 12 hours, Jones said.

Trumbull also is designated a Blue Distinction Center+ for Knee and Hip Replacement by Anthem BlueCross / BlueShield.

"It's kind of a hidden gem," Jones said.

Trumbull Regional offers free orthopedic seminars for those who have questions about their joints or a joint replacement several times each year. The next seminar will be scheduled for this summer.



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Technology leads the way in orthopedic surgery

By **ALLIE VUGRINCIC**
Staff writer

WARREN — Orthopedic doctor Tom Jones doesn't play video games and easily gets motion sick — but that hasn't caused him any problems in or kept him from succeeding with something brand new in orthopedic surgery: augmented reality.

A longtime leader in joint replacement technology, Trumbull Regional Medical Center's Center for Joint Replacement recently became the first in the nation to add FDA-approved augmented reality to its arsenal of technologies for total hip and total knee replacements.

Trumbull Regional has been using a Mako robotic arm to assist with surgery for years and also uses newer GPS and Bluetooth computerized navigation technology — both of which increase the accuracy of a joint replacement.

Last month, Jones donned a pair of augmented reality glasses and performed eight total knee and four total hip replacement surgeries.

"The first person I did, she was overly excited. She was so happy to have it done, because she's of that mindset. She likes advancement," Jones said, adding that she did very well with the surgery.

The glasses, which are tinted like sunglasses but don't impede vision, recognize when the wearer comes into the surgical field and display targeting rays, starting the surgery software, Jones explained.

"When you drop your head down — boom! There's the end of the femur and it dials in all those things. Then you drill the pins and the accuracy of drilling the pins to put the cutting block on is 0.1 degrees," Jones said.

That's compared to about 2 degrees of accuracy using the Mako robotic arm or 7 to 8 degrees "the old-fashioned way."

The augmented reality technology has been in the process of getting FDA approval for about two years, undergoing testing by 10 orthopedic surgeons around the United States. Jones, president of the medical staff and chief of surgery at Trumbull Regional, made sure the hospital was the first on the list to use the technology once it was approved.