

everyday

5 signs of
hearing loss

Healing common
sports injuries

Treatment
options for
varicose veins

Back pain limited off-road
photojournalist Lance
Schwartz's ability to work,
but six months after back
surgery, he logged over 100
pain-free miles on an ATV.

BACK IN ACTION

▶▶▶ Overcoming back pain and getting your life back in gear ◀◀◀

Back in

Back pain limited Lance Schwartz's work as an off-road photojournalist at an ATV magazine. But six months after back surgery, he logged over 100 pain-free miles on an ATV on Utah's legendary Paiute Trail for a magazine adventure story.



ACTION

SPINAL SURGERY HELPS PHOTOJOURNALIST GET BACK TO THE OUTDOORS

When back pain brings a person to their knees, that's more than a sign that it's time to make a change. That's exactly what happened to Lance Schwartz, 44, of Lewisburg.

"I struggled with back pain for many years and realize now, I should have had surgery years ago," said Schwartz.

"I knew it was time to take action when coughing or sneezing would literally take all the strength from my legs and bring me to my knees."

A self-defined outdoors type, Schwartz enjoys riding dirt bikes,

hunting, and saltwater fishing with his two children, and coaching youth sports.

"I couldn't sleep, I couldn't pick up my daughter who weighed just 30 pounds at the time, and

I could no longer effectively do my job of testing and photographing ATVs and UTVs as an off-road photojournalist for *ATV Rider* magazine,” said Schwartz. He also teaches Technology Education at Selinsgrove School District. “The pain was terrible, but I didn’t want to use maintenance medications, especially narcotics, to treat the symptoms; they just weren’t something I was comfortable putting into my body,” he said.

He met with Matthew Eager, MD, surgeon, neck and spine specialist at SUN Orthopaedics of Evangelical, who determined Schwartz was a perfect candidate for spinal fusion surgery to repair the two vertebrae in his lower back that were already bone on bone.

“About a month before surgery, I started to get cold feet. My wife and I took four pages of questions I compiled to Dr. Eager. He spent an hour with us addressing every one of my concerns,” said Schwartz. “He eased my mind that surgery would be the key to getting me back to my active lifestyle.”

In January 2015, Schwartz checked in for surgery. The next day, the Occupational Therapy staff had him up and walking, telling him he would have to show he could walk stairs before he could go home. He was released that night and was able to sleep in the comfort of his own bed.

He was told that for the best results to walk as much as possible, but wasn’t permitted to drive for three weeks. Due to the winter weather, his wife would drive

him to local stores where he could safely walk laps, going a little farther each day. Schwartz returned to teaching once he was cleared to drive again. The procedure took away his nerve pain and eliminated the numbness and pain in his feet and legs.

Six months later on a magazine adventure story, Schwartz logged over 100 pain-free miles on an ATV on Utah’s legendary Paiute Trail system. He’s back to the life and activities he loves to do most.

“I struggled with back pain for many years and realize now, I should have had surgery years ago!”

—Lance Schwartz

Photojournalist Lance Schwartz with his wife, Deanna, and their children, Gavin and Lauren.



BACK PAIN TREATMENTS

NON-SURGICAL

Medications—several medications can be used to help relieve pain.

- Aspirin or acetaminophen
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medicines
- Steroids taken orally or injected into the spine

Physical Medicine—medications and therapeutic treatments combined.

- Physical therapy
- Braces
- Chiropractic or manipulation therapy
- Traction
- Exercise-based programs

SURGICAL

Spinal Fusion—the basic idea is to fuse together the painful vertebrae so they heal into a single, solid bone.

Disk Replacement—replacing a worn or degenerated disk in the lower part of the spine with an artificial replacement.

Decompression—to open an area of nerve pinch in the back that causes pain and numbness.



BACK PAIN?

Call SUN Orthopaedics of Evangelical at **570-524-4446**.