



Lexie Joy: **Hip Arthroscopy** brings faster return to **competitive swimming.**

Lexie Joy began swimming competitively at the age of five. She competed through high school and had a promising swimming career on the horizon after receiving a full ride scholarship to University of Illinois- Chicago. In May 2016, at the end of her college freshman year, Lexie began having a sharp pain in her hip and groin area which affected both her swimming and ability to walk. Both her swim coaches and a physician she consulted in Chicago advised her to treat the pain conservatively with physical therapy, but Lexie looked for an alternative option that would allow her to be back in the water and competing sooner.

While home from school, Lexie saw an orthopedic surgeon who referred her to **Dr. Geoffrey Van Thiel** at OrthoIllinois. Lexie's mother, Kelli Joy, shared what happened next, "Once I had his name, I went online and did some research into Dr. Van Thiel. I wanted to know what kind of experience he had, where he went to college, what other patients had to say about him. We were very interested in him

because of his experience with athletes. Once we met with Dr. Van Thiel, there was no doubt we were going to go with him. He explained all of our options, was very thorough, answered all of our questions, and all of us liked him a lot. Most importantly, Lexie liked him a lot and was very comfortable with him."

Dr. Van Thiel suggested Lexie have **hip arthroscopy with labral repair**. In July 2016, she decided to move forward with the surgery, fearing that conservative treatment alone would not fix the problem and would not allow her to swim her sophomore year of college. "This was my first surgery" Lexie recalled, "and I liked having the surgery at the OrthoIllinois Surgery Center. It was close to my home compared to having to go to Chicago. It was also really nice being at the surgery center along with patients who were having procedures similar to mine. It would have been intimidating to be in a large hospital."

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After the surgery, Lexie knew she had made the right choice. Dr. Van Thiel reported that she had a 35% tear, which would not have healed on its own. Lexie started physical therapy the day after her surgery, and during her six months' recuperation, Dr. Van Thiel worked closely with her physical therapist, trainers, and coaches to make sure she would be ready for swim season. "Lexie's success is as much a result of her commitment to recovery as it is to the surgery," said Dr. Van Thiel. "She is a rock star patient and will continue to be a very successful swimmer on the collegiate level and beyond."



Dr. Van Thiel had advised that it could take a year for full recovery, but just six months later Lexie is already close to 100%. Her coaches are very pleased with her recovery and she is achieving her best swimming times. Lexie swims twenty hours a week and weight trains twice a week and only occasionally does her hip feel sore from the surgery. "Dr. Van Thiel and all of the staff at Orthollinois are top notch!" said Kelli Joy. "He helped Lexie get her swimming career back, we could not have hoped for a better outcome!"

**To schedule a consultation,
please call 815-398-9491.**

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