

JOHN J. REGAN, MD

FELLOWSHIP-TRAINED SPINE SURGEON

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Miami doctor back to active lifestyle after unique minimally invasive spine surgery

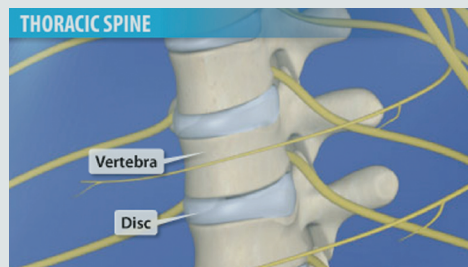
Alex is a successful chiropractor and has spent years helping others with musculoskeletal conditions return to activity. On Christmas Day in 2010, while trying to save a man from drowning, Alex was injured. Only, he didn't realize at the time the severity of his injury.

Not long after the injury, Alex started having mild pain in his middle back along with numbness and tingling that radiated down into his right leg. At first, he figured his symptoms would go away after a little rest. Unfortunately, instead of getting better, the numbness and tingling worsened. Alex made an appointment with an orthopedic specialist and an MRI of his lumbar spine was ordered. The MRI results came back clear. A brain MRI also showed normal results.

Alex decided to give his symptoms a little more time and tried nonsurgical care for relief. He took anti-inflammatories to help relieve his back pain. Alex also tried some specialized exercises to help relieve the numbness he was experiencing.

His back pain and neurological symptoms continued. Alex noticed increased weakness into his right leg and had lost nearly two inches of muscle mass. Normal activities, such as working and helping care for his children, were becoming difficult because of his condition. Recreational activities that Alex enjoys, such as Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and running, were impossible.

As a chiropractor, Alex knows many physicians, surgeons and specialists. He was referred to an orthopedic surgeon who specializes in spine. Alex made an appointment with the surgeon and an MRI revealed that he had a large herniated disc in a very difficult to reach location in his upper back. The surgeon explained to Alex that a complex thoracic spine



Alex, shown above, started having pain in his middle back along with numbness and tingling into his right leg almost immediately following an injury. Herniated discs in the thoracic spine, shown in illustration above, are typically caused by either degenerative disc disease or a traumatic injury to the middle back. After Dr. Regan performed VATS, Alex was pain free and has returned to activity.

surgery would be necessary, Alex remembers, "He looked at me and told me I needed to see Dr. John Regan, who pioneered VATS — a technique to access thoracic discs without major surgery".

Video Assisted Thoracic Surgery (VATS) is a minimally invasive (keyhole) surgical procedure. It allows the surgeon to directly examine the chest cavity without a big incision. Dr. Regan is one of a few surgeons in the U.S. who is proficient in the surgery. Three or four small incisions are made to allow the surgeon to use the special instruments (video camera and endoscope) needed for this operation. During the procedure, a small video camera is used to project pictures of the chest cavity onto a screen.

Because Alex lives in Miami and Dr. Regan is located in Beverly Hills, his first consult with Dr. Regan was on the phone. Dr. Regan viewed Alex's MRI and discussed with him in detail the thoracic spine surgery necessary to repair the herniation. Alex knew he couldn't continue to live with his symptoms and needed to return to work. He scheduled the surgery with Dr. Regan and made travel arrangements.

Dr. Regan performed the video assisted thoracic surgery in March of 2011. Alex felt immediate relief from his back pain and his numbness was improved. Though recovery from surgery was not easy, he gradually introduced activity back into his life. He started with walking for short periods and increased his distance gradually. At the same time, his leg numbness continued to improve and now Alex has full relief from all numbness and tingling.

Today, Alex has returned full-time to his busy chiropractic practice. He is free to enjoy an active life with his wife and three children. The family recently enjoyed an outing at Disney World and looks forward to skiing this winter.

John Regan, MD

Board-certified orthopedic surgeon
Fellowship-trained spine surgeon

Dr. Regan has an international reputation as an author of spine research, and is widely regarded as the pioneer in minimally invasive spine surgery including video-assisted surgery of the thoracic spine. Dr. Regan was one of the first four spine surgeons during the creation of the Texas Back Institute, which was the first and largest spine specialty clinic in the United States. Dr. Regan was then selected by Cedars-Sinai Medical Center to become Director of their new Cedars-Sinai Institute for Spinal Disorders. In 2005, Dr. Regan left Cedars-Sinai for a busy private practice in Beverly Hills, CA. Dr. Regan completed fellowships in spine trauma at the prestigious A.O. International Hospital in Switzerland and at Johns Hopkins University Hospital in Baltimore.

