# Man Undergoes Phrenic Nerve Surgery To Relieve Shortness Of Breath, Will Celebrate With Marathon

Kurt Matthewson went out for his typical run one morning, and quite suddenly, felt shortness of breath and was unable to continue. When the problem persisted he went to a specialist, who administered tests revealing the left side of Matthewson's diaphragm was not functioning due to damage to his phrenic nerve, the nerve that controls function of the diaphragm muscle. The diaphragm muscle is the primary muscle involved in breathing. It was determined that the 48-year-old Madrid, IA banking executive was working on 50 percent lung capacity

Four years removed from the problem, Matthewson found Dr. Matthew Kaufman on the Internet. Among his nerve surgery expertise, which he performs at The Institute for Advanced Reconstruction in Shrewsbury, NJ, Dr. Kaufman is the only known surgeon to perform specialized phrenic nerve surgery. He has performed the surgery more than 75 times, on patients from age 11 to older than 70 years from all over the United States and one from Australia.

The cause of phrenic nerve damage is sometimes very easy to pinpoint, such as surgery to the neck or chest, or an accident; however sometimes, as in Matthewson's case, it can be difficult to discern.

As part of his usual procedure, Dr. Kaufman did a nerve transplant with a graft taken from Matthewson's ankle.

According to Dr. Kaufman, "We are optimistic that Mr. Matthewson will regain substantial diaphragm function after undergoing phrenic nerve surgery and that he will see progressive improvements over the next two to three years as the regenerated nerve leads to gradual muscle recovery."

Kurt Matthewson 's surgery was six months ago. Reports Matthewson, "Today I'm feeling better. I feel my breathing is improved. I'm going to fight the good fight." Matthewson's goal is to run a marathon (26.2 miles) on the one-year anniversary of his surgery, July 20, 2013.

**Source URL (retrieved on *12/09/2013 - 2:43am*):**
http://www.surgicalproductsmag.com/news/2013/04/man-undergoes-phrenic-nerve-surgery-relieve-shortness-breath-will-celebrate-marathon