

LANCE SHERMOEN

Living life fully

The first things you notice in the grainy YouTube videos of Lance Shermoen competing in swing dance competitions are the groovy 1980s clothing and big hair. The next thing you notice is the incredible artistry and athleticism of the two dancers, and how much fun they seem to be having. What you can't see, what is hidden behind the twirls and the kicks and the amazing lifts, is that Lance himself could barely see.

Lance, a seven-time winner of the National Swing Dance Championships and a Certified Public Accountant, coped with deteriorating vision for years. "I had been wearing glasses since I was three or four," he recalls. "I wore contact lenses when I played football in high school and college, but I was never really successful with them. Mostly, I wore glasses." But not during dance competitions.

So when he turned 50, Lance decided to pursue LASIK surgery to correct his vision permanently. It was a decision he'll always regret.

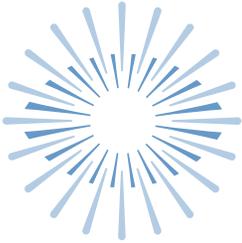
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“VISION IS SOMETHING WE often take for granted - until we don't have it. Lance's story reminds us that even some of the most routine tasks can be monumentally difficult and frustrating when you can't see. But due in no small part to his undying optimism and enthusiasm for life, Lance has reclaimed his and is living it fully.”

— Dr. Alan Kwok





BOSTON FOUNDATION *for* SIGHT

Lance Shermoen continued

“After the first treatment, my vision was blurry,” he recalls. “A week later they did a touch-up, and I had that done four more times over the next six months.” But nothing worked. His corneas were left full of peaks and valleys, and now even glasses could not adequately correct his vision. Contact lenses were out of the question.

Lance’s personal and professional lives were dramatically impacted. His dancing days were ending (“I blew a few aerals because I couldn’t see to get the handhold,” he recalls) and he was using magnifying glasses to do his accounting work. “I struggled with it for about ten years,” says Lance. Then, he saw a highly respected ophthalmologist in New York, who referred him to Boston Foundation for Sight.

“I came to Boston and found out I was a great candidate,” he says. “It is really amazing. I can’t even feel them, and my vision is almost 20/20.” When Dr. Kwok first inserted his devices, “it felt like I had nothing in my eyes. It was really spectacular.”

Highlights so far, he reports, are being able to read street signs, and reading the menu board on the wall at a nearby deli. “I never could see it before, I would always have to ask someone to read it to me,” he says with obvious delight. Most importantly, Lance can once again amaze and delight audiences with his dance moves.

