

Russian Skater Plushenko Undergoes Successful Back Operation

By [The Moscow Times](#)

March 11, 2014



Evgeni Plushenko has checked out of a Tel Aviv clinic following successful back surgery.

Russia's two-time Olympic figure skating champion Evgeni Plushenko has checked out of a Tel Aviv clinic following successful back surgery and is returning to Moscow.

Plushenko won his second career Olympic gold medal with Russia in the inaugural team event in Sochi last month, but then dramatically withdrew from the individual competition after aggravating an old problem minutes before he was due to skate.

According to state-owned Channel One television, a screw in Plushenko's back that supported an artificial intervertebral disc broke following an attempted triple axel jump in the warm-up.

A three-and-a-half-hour operation saw the screw fixed and doctors expressed confidence the 31-year-old would be walking in a matter of days, if not immediately.

"I have been released, and I have started rehabilitation," Plushenko tweeted Monday. "I'm

returning to Moscow today."

The recovery process is expected to take at least six months.

Plushenko's last-minute pullout caused a firestorm of controversy in his home nation. Concerns were high before the Games that his fitness — in doubt due to 12 operations on his back and knee in the last few years — would not allow him to skate four programs in eight days. Many were lobbying for 18-year-old Maxim Kovtun to go in his place after he beat Plushenko in the Russian nationals.

Last month, Plushenko backtracked on an earlier statement that he would retire, saying he may try to reach the next Winter Games in Pyeongchang, when he would be 35 years of age, far older than any current elite-level skater.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/03/11/russian-skater-plushenko-undergoes-successful-back-operation-a32841>