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Friday 27th January

was the moment that **Leon** stood unaided for the very first time. After routine back surgery left Leon with a severed spinal cord, he was faced with a long rehabilitation process to enable him to gain any sort of function. After being referred to the orthotics department at Portsmouth Enablement Centre, Leon met with orthotist Frank, and after discussing all the treatment options, Leon was prescribed bilateral KAFOs custom made by Steeper. Designed with his biomechanical deficits in mind, his KAFOs are tailored to his exacting needs, giving him extra support and control. With the support of his orthotists Frank and Hannah and with his own sheer determination, Leon has defied all the odds and is now able to stand unaided.



Case Study

Leon Bunce



The story

On 7th December 2011, Leon Bunce had routine surgery on his back but complications meant he was left with a severed spinal cord and paralysed from the waist down.

The severity of the damage was unclear at the beginning, but after several months in hospital and in excruciating pain, Leon was finally told that the damage was permanent and that he would require long term rehabilitation to learn how to deal with his condition and gain as much function as possible.

On being discharged from hospital, Leon was a full time wheelchair user, something that he hated more than anything. Going from being over 6ft 3 to being sat down all day, he hated the way people looked down at him. Not only that, he now felt that he could no longer go anywhere as there are so many restrictions for disabled access. Going for a pint with his friends was something he enjoyed, but with steps to get into most places and disabled toilets hard to navigate, it became hard work.

Fed up with life as he knew it and wanting to do something, he asked his GP for a referral to the orthotics department at Portsmouth Enablement Centre.

The solution

At his first appointment, Leon talked to Steeper orthotist, Frank about his goal of wanting to be able to stand again. After plenty of discussions and after analysing the various different options, it was decided that a custom made bilateral KAFO would be the best option for Leon. However, with the severity of his condition, it was not going to be an easy process.

Leon's bilateral KAFO was custom made by Steeper and was designed based on his specific biomechanical deficits. As such, providing him with the exact level of control and support he needs in both his knees and ankles. Only a few weeks after his initial assessment, Leon was fitted with his

orthosis. Not knowing what to expect, his first reaction was that "they are very white." But eager to try them out he put them on for the first time. His new KAFOs fitted well to his legs and with the support from Frank and Hannah, Leon stood for the first time.

"From the outset, it was always going to be difficult, Leon has a severely severed spine and if I am honest, I was not sure at the beginning whether he would ever be able to stand. But there was a chance and in order to give Leon the best possible outcome, we recommended that along with his orthosis he perform simple hip flexion exercises on a daily basis. Building up his strength and aligning his hips properly has helped him tremendously and as a result he can now stand unaided." Frank Frankovitch, Leon's orthotist.

The turning point

Standing for the first time, taking all of his energy, was the moment when Leon realised he had achieved something he never thought he would be able to do. His ultimate goal was to be able to stand and achieving this at his first fitting gave him the strength to continue and push himself even further.

Continuing with his exercises and using his bilateral KAFOs daily, Leon has built up the strength to be able to stand unaided. After being constrained to his wheelchair, he is now able to stand in his kitchen with a cup of coffee, making more of a difference to his life than he ever imagined.

Whilst he has a long road of rehabilitation in front of him, with the help of his Steeper orthotists, Frank and Hannah, his custom made bilateral KAFOs and his own sheer determination Leon has proved that with the right help and support around you, you really can achieve anything you set your mind to.

To find out more about Leon visit www.steepergroup.com