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Saturday 19th October

was the first time Rob rode his bike on the track in Spain and felt like himself again, enjoying his favourite hobby with a great bunch of friends.

For months after his below knee amputation, Rob thought he'd never get back to riding his track bike. However after following the advice of the team at Harold Wood and working closely with his prosthetist and technician, Rob was able to ride out in confidence with friends.



"I knew I could trust Colin and Glen; not just from my prosthetic point of view but ex-racer Glen also knew the precise alignment I would need to be both comfortable on the bike and get a great riding experience - I can't thank them enough; they've given me my life back!"

Case Study

Rob Hollyman



The story

Prior to his amputation Rob was out riding and meeting up with friendship group 'Team Toss' every week, and traveled twice a year to Spain to enjoy track days together. A recent below-knee amputee, and a keen motorbike owner with both road and track bikes, Rob's dream was to return to the hobby he loved.

After several months recovering in hospital, Rob began his journey to return to biking. He was referred to the Harold Wood Prosthetics Centre where he met his rehabilitation team, including prosthetist Colin Gardner and prosthetic technician Glen Adams.

Rob talked Colin through his daily activities, which included working within the transport industry and playing Badminton - but his passion for biking shine through the most: Rob lit up when he talked about biking, telling Colin about his track days away, this would be one of his major goals when it comes to identifying what he wanted to achieve with a prosthesis. Colin could understand the passion as a keen biker himself.

"I was desperate to get to Spain, but I had a long way to go... walking on a prosthetic leg for a start! Then getting back on the road bike to build up my confidence and finally to get on the track bike. I listened to the advice given by the whole team at Harold Wood. It's a huge thing to take that first step on a prosthesis and I just couldn't believe at first that anyone could understand but Colin knew just how I was feeling."

The solution

Working with Colin and the wider team, Rob built up his confidence when walking, and was able to ride the road bike again after some adjustment to his boots for a pin-lock fastening and passing an assessment with the DVLA. Rob's prescription is for a pin lock liner system which worked well for every day use and social biking. However, Rob struggled with comfort on the track bike; the one he would need to enjoy trips away.

"I went back to see Colin after trialling the limb on my track bike and it was so uncomfortable and painful to wear, I started to think I'd have to make some very expensive changes to my bike or miss out on the trip altogether." Being locked in by the pin and restricted by the liner the discomfort was exacerbated when wearing leathers, it was decided he needed a limb specific to the track bike.

The team at Harold Wood created a basic patella-tendon-bearing (PTB) socket with mild supracondylar suspension, and a lower posterior brim and a terry sock was used to reduce bunching at the knee. Different suspension sleeves were tried but all created too much resistance when bending the knee; a cuff was too constricting but a Juzo sleeve offered just the right amount of support and freedom of movement. Further suspension would be gained by close fitting leathers, fasteners and boots. Rob was asked to bring the track bike to Harold Wood centre to allow Colin and Glen to align, fit and adjust the prosthesis in situ.

The turning point

The day of the fitting came and the heavens opened. Motorcycles, leather and bodies don't work well in such extreme conditions. So a very large, 1000cc racing bike was wheeled into the workshop! The bike was raised onto its stand, Rob donned his leathers and it was all beginning to get a little surreal.

Rob enthuses *"These guys really went above and beyond for me; I'm not sure it would happen in many places where you'd be asked to bring a motorbike inside!"*

In October Rob travelled with the group to Spain and spent the day on the track, confident and comfortable he was able to enjoy the trip to the full. *"It was great to get back to Spain and the freedom of the track. I would advise anyone learning to live with a prosthesis to talk to their team; it made all the difference for me!"*

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