

## Joel's Journey – 27 June, 2016



Monday morning Week 3 and I knew I was in for a big one. No rest day and still feeling the pinch from the previous week.

Fortunately, the trainers at project walk are quite knowledgeable and advised me what I should be eating this week. Nutrition being one of the most important parts of my rehabilitation I thoroughly enjoyed refuelling my body each day after rehab. I was also informed that the further into my rehab program I get, my central nervous system COULD begin to awaken and cause many changes in my body. Monday night was the first of 3 consecutive sleepless nights. I was kept awake the majority of the night by uncontrollable spasms, extremely uncomfortable pins and needles for hours at a time and odd feelings in my legs. This as odd as it may sound is a good thing and suggests my central nervous system may slowly be awakening.

Tuesday I had a massive breakthrough as the trainers were able to feel muscles in my quadriceps firing. Although this is a massive positive in the scheme of things, it means nothing in regards to functional movement for me, but it is defiantly something I will take home with me and continue to work with to hopefully improve. Tuesday was a great day in regards to rehab and the start of my journey to recovery!

Wednesday I used the functional electrical stimulation pads in a different way to what I usually do in Melbourne. Previously to my time at Project Walk I would stay in my chair with pads placed across my legs and on my buttocks and when

stimulated my legs would move in a cycling motion. Over here whilst using the FES I have been removed from my chair placed in a harness and pads stuck to my legs so that when stimulated I would move from the seated position on the bed to a standing position. When the stimulation would cut out I would return to the bed in a seated position completing one repetition of a squat. This was an awesome feeling and something I had not done in 2 years. A common factor over here seems to be re visiting old experiences from days prior to my accident in doing things such as Standing, walking on a treadmill, squats, chin-ups, kneeling, sitting on the floor and in my own time, swimming.

Thursday; by this stage my body was fatiguing quickly and I was hurting. This was the day I began working on my pull up strength, it was a real shock at how much harder it was to pull myself off the ground and bring my chest to the bar. I really took for granted the strength I used to have in my ability to lift my own body weight. The main focus here at Project Walk has predominantly been correct technique instead of how many repetitions I could complete. Another interesting approach project walk take is making sure I remain out of my chair for the whole 3 hours. The mindset here being rehab in the long term is to get me out of my chair and doing things out of my chair. Whether that happens or not is a different story but there is never any danger with aiming too high.

Nearing the end of the week, the pool and the chef were my best friends! I proved myself wrong getting through this week unscathed and now look forward to spending a weekend with a friend from LA and Elisa relaxing, soaking up the Californian sun and seeing some local bands play. This being only the end of week 3 and with the progress I have made I am already setting my sights on returning next year for a longer period of time as you can only achieve so much in 6 weeks.

Joel