

## Joel's Journey – July 4, 2016

Last week I mentioned something about my central nervous system being awoken more and more and spasms in my legs increasing. The last 7 days has seen some extremely strong and new spasms occurring which are both positive yet also frustrating because it effects my sleep and daily living. The upside to these spasms is the potential to eventually understand what sets these off and learn how to control them and potentially assist me in either standing or any other functional movements.

I touched on my ambitions for rehabilitation next year in my previous journal entry and these have not waivered. With the knowledge, strength and confidence gained in this short stint, a six-month minimum period next year will benefit me tenfold. In my post Talbot time, my goals for the next 2-3 years were initially resume studying at university, gain employment and get my life back on track, but this trip has changed my mindset and I have come to the realisation the time for rehab, sacrifice and hard work is NOW. Yet again I couldn't be here without support from my family and friends back home, various businesses and my sidekick, Elisa, so thankyou again.

In regards to rehab in the last 7 days, it has been quite seamless and educational more so than my physically demanding sessions. I began working with a new trainer who was quite knowledgeable and opened up my mind to new approaches to stretching, techniques, and looking after my body post Project Walk time. I have learnt that rehab is not only physical but also mental in what you can learn and retain for time outside of 'the 4 walls'. Rehab never stops.

This week was a refresher on the previous few weeks of my time at Project Walk, breaking down movements and focusing on fine movements and technique. If there has been one thing I took away from this week, my wheelchair is my worst enemy, it encourages poor posture, doesn't allow me to stretch out, shortens muscles that shouldn't be and in general creates bad habits. The first thing I intend on doing upon my return to Australia is employing the handy skills of my father aka Don (or anyone with the tools and skills willing to help), to build me a table like the ones you see at Project Walk for me to stretch out on and replicate some of the things I have done over here.

In a notable difference this week I was able to complete 4 strict pull ups in comparison to my 1 of the previous week. A new core exercise this week saw

me sitting on a medicine ball in an upright position with my feet on the ground maintaining my balance. This was by far my greatest display of strength gained while over here, yet also my balancing skills improving dramatically. Previously I was not able to sit up on the edge of my bed, now I am able to hold my balance on a ball that was moving from under me and I had to compensate to remain upright. A very rewarding exercise for my confidence!

With the long weekend approaching for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, I completed my week 4 of rehab and hit the road on a 4-hour journey to Las Vegas. Unfortunately, I don't have a bank account like Mike Conley, so gambling was kept to an absolute minimum, what an amazing experience to spend 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend in 45 degree heat in such a crazy city alongside Elisa! That place never stops, but after 9 hours of pushing up and down the strip checking out the sights and sounds, I definitely did! I head into my final two weeks at Project Walk this week and that's it....for this year.

Thanks for reading and following my journey so far, until next week, Peace.

Joel