

Joel's Journey – 18 July, 2016



It is with great disappointment that I write my final journal entry for 2016 of my time at Project Walk. I was starting to see improvement and consistency in my recovery and it is a shame that I cannot continue my therapy just yet, because every day for the last 2 weeks saw minor improvements.

Before I came over here people were asking me what my goals were and what I hoped to achieve. This sort of a question was hard to answer because of the damage to my spinal cord and not knowing what a realistic goal was. I had no expectations only an optimistic attitude as to what I could achieve. The improvements that I have made won't be visible to the naked eye other than a bit of muscle growth. I take away from my short time at Project Walk invaluable knowledge, increased strength and the ability to create movement in my abdominal muscles and legs.

The last 2 weeks of my therapy I have felt a genuine happiness and sense of achievement, I have definitely learnt to appreciate the SMALL things. A 2%

improvement in my body has given me joy, pride and has been evident when speaking to family and friends back home with comments being made towards my positive attitude and overall mindset. Fortunately, I have had Elisa by my side at every session for every exercise and she has been filming every minute of my time here with the intention to bring the footage home and continue on from my teachings using this footage.

A goal of mine for the next 6 months during my time back home would be to maintain the standard I am at physically and not let the last 6 weeks of hard work fade away. I will achieve this through reaching out to many people within the community who have unique approaches to neuro-stimulation and alternative techniques. I will obviously still continue my time at The Next Step and hope to add value to this facility with my gained knowledge from Project Walk.

To this day, almost 2 years on from my injury, I still stop and think about my current predicament and ask is this really happening? Is this a bad dream? But before I get too bogged down in negative thinking I look at the bigger picture and consider myself very fortunate. To have the massive support base that I have with friends I know I can rely on any time any day of the week, a massive loving and caring family, a very patient and compassionate girlfriend and to live within a community that is so generous. I am a firm believer of what you put out into the world comes back to you, so to all the people along my journey that I have met, who have assisted me in any way I can't thank you enough, and when the time comes that I am back on my feet and I am able to repay the favour I will definitely do so.

To wrap things up, I would like to thank the amazing people at Project Walk for creating such a positive environment, and an atmosphere that needs to be witnessed to appreciate. Thank you for seeing me as a person first and not my injury. Nothing was ever too difficult and nothing was impossible. There are a few moments in my life I will never forget, my time here being one.

Joel