

Break a Leg--Not an Ankle!

When people perform and to give them luck, the expression, "Break a leg" is often uttered...Well needless to say, my performance on an icy, snowy, cold, Pennsylvania black-ice morning consisted of a half a second spill that resulted in both leg bones and an ankle "broken"...that split second changed my life from normal to anything but.

After surgery...I like it when they say to see the doctor, but when they say to see a surgeon, you know things are going to be CUT, CUT, CUT! Sure enough...a nice stainless steel plate with screws and an eight inch gash on the ankle transformed my life from moving and grooving to hopping and propping a cast with a leg the colors of the rainbow. Doctor say, "NO weight and don't fall"...Yeah tell that to a 63 year old grandma who needs hopping lessons. I think hopping involves height not stamina. Propping I am good at because it involves lying down.

No one tells you your house will change from a standard 3 bedroom, 2 1/2 baths to a handicap accessible nursing home. Steps everywhere into the house...front door, garage access, and back door. This calls for creativity...(who has time to build ramps) So to leave or to return to the house, our Polaris Ranger All Utility Vehicle becomes the mode of transportation to and from the car because there is snow on the ground or it is raining....well that problem solved. All the vehicle changes really tick off the male nurse (my husband) with two pillows in his one hand and a walker in the other. The house is another story....First the bathroom: the commode has to be raised, the shower has to be changed to a spray apparatus and find a safety seat for the one legged grandma. Try putting on make-up and fixing your hair sideways at the mirror...Contacts go and out come the glasses cause if I lost a contact I wouldn't be able to find it on one leg more or less see it...Bedroom...sleep by yourself..it is the only solution...Male nurse not happy.....

Balancing...wow what a feat! I learned to balance on one foot, hop, put on my underwear like I was lassoing a cow, spit into a glass after brushing my teeth cause I can't hit the sink sideways, put on eyeliner without pulling the eyelid taut (all free-hand), and my snacks consist of nuts, prunes, and popcorn so that I won't get constipated (the pain

pills do slow the colon down). I have now named my condition Useless Leg Syndrome. My life has been drastically altered down to my male nurse, a walker that I name my Cadillac cause it has a seat, brakes, and 4 wheels which I steer with one good leg. It is great on the hardwood floors and I am now ready for my CDL (Commercial Driver's License). My neighbor calls it Crazy Driver Lady. I can lay rubber when it is time to go to the bathroom. Peeing never changes whether you have one leg or two except for more frequent changes of underwear. The hopping definitely has something to do with bladder control. More laundry for the male nurse...again not happy.

Things evolve as the days go by and you graduate to PT (Physical Therapy)...First they torture you with exercises involving towels, marbles, tennis balls, and exercise bands of varying colors and even have you writing the alphabet in the air with your toes. When the doctor (surgeon in disguise) tells you to put weight on the leg, all hell breaks loose in the PT room. Torture turns into ibuprofen, compression hose and cussing.

The moral of this story...when someone wants to wish you well and tells you to break a leg, think twice because it usually involves an ankle, a disrupted house, and unskilled male nurse, hopping lessons and new techniques for doing the simplest of things. The male nurse resorts to drinking which makes him see double and feel single and you know you are still alive because the left ankle never lets you forget. You howl and hobble and wish your Useless Leg Syndrome would quickly turn into Restless A-- Syndrome. At this point who cares how much gas costs because when you do get on both feet, the charge card is going to do double time. The Avon Lady and JC Penney catalog worked as a good substitute, but no more.

Good luck with your life and remember: " Life isn't always tied with a bow, but it is still a gift."

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May 18, 2007**
