

# Hospital Doc Gets Hands-Free Help with Healing

Lancaster-based paediatrician, Steve Cade, has been an ice-climbing enthusiast for 25 years and had always managed to escape serious injuries until a fall from the ice during a recent trip to Norway left him with a fractured talus & medial malleolus (ankle bones).



Explains Steve: "I've always enjoyed outdoor pursuits especially mountaineering climbing, and ice climbing. I just slipped while putting an ice screw in during the climb and my injury turned out to be much more severe than it first appeared."

Steve was lowered off & crawled across the ice to the car. He was x-rayed in a Norwegian hospital but there was no sign of a break on the X-ray so he returned home in a wheelchair. When the pain didn't subside, Steve's medical team at the Royal Lancaster Infirmary carried out an MRI scan which revealed the fractures, obscured by another bone. His lower leg was put in a cast and he was told that it would be NWB (non-weight bearing) for three months, after which the plaster would be removed and the injury assessed to decide whether an operation will be necessary.

Like most patients, Steve was sent home with crutches but his ability to deal with his ankle injury was exacerbated by whiplash that he'd suffered in a recent car accident.

Steve continues: "I simply couldn't use shoulder crutches because of the whiplash and even elbow crutches put strain on my shoulder so I couldn't use them either. I was facing three months with no mobility."

Keen to see if there was any alternative to conventional crutches, Steve started to search online and found the iWALKfree, a Canadian innovation that straps onto the thigh. Fabricated from lightweight polymer material with an extruded aluminium main beam, the iWALKfree has a platform to support the leg, transmitting the patient's weight from the knee to the crutch.

"I ordered one straight away and it arrived the following day," Steve continues. "After a twenty minute practice I was able to take the dog for a walk and one month on the iWALKfree has helped me to get on with a normal routine inside & outside the house. The only downside is that it means I have no excuse for getting out of the vacuuming!"

Steve has been so impressed with the iWALKfree that he has shown it to his orthopaedic consultants and to his colleagues at the hospital where he works.

"Everyone's initial response is 'isn't that clever'," says Steve, "but its cleverness lies in its simplicity. It is a great idea implemented really well and for me it means the difference between three months as a couch potato (watching daytime TV) or getting out and about while my ankle heals - the dog loves me again as well !"



For Further information visit: [www.peglegs.co.uk](http://www.peglegs.co.uk)