

NHC Cyclo-Therapy® – Helping with Damien's Recovery

Damian was a keen amateur triathlete before a training exercise on his bike changed his life forever. Damian was cycling a local circuit, which he had completed many times previously, when a car stopped abruptly and Damian, unable to stop in time, crashed into the back of the car.

Damian was taken to St Marys in Paddington where they found the initial impact was to his face, which was pushed onto his neck, his back was fractured and he had compressed C6 vertebrae, ruptured 2 ligaments in his neck and was left with spinal cord damage at the level of the shoulder blades. He was taken for surgery to try and repair the damage to his neck and face and spent the 2 weeks following this in the major trauma unit. Following this he was then repatriated to Withington Hospital in Highgate, where he spent a further 5 weeks before going to the Spinal Injury Unit in the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in Stanmore on the 21st August.

Damian's first challenge was a mental one, as he found it difficult going from being a very physically capable person, who excelled at sports, to a body which no longer worked the way he wanted. His next challenge was to improve his physical health. When Damian arrived at Stanmore, he couldn't even push a manual wheelchair, but within a week of being there he was able to stand for an extended period and he took his first steps (with support) 10 days after arriving. By the time Damian went home, in November he was able to walk on crutches.

Damian's struggles include loss of leg function and hand and arm impairment. He has quite pronounced spasticity in both his left and right hand and loss of sensation and motor function. An important part of his physical rehabilitation has been improving his hand function and capability, but he is now able to feed, wash and dress himself independently, something that he was unable to do when he was first injured.

Damian was first introduced to NHC Cyclo-Therapy® while at Stanmore and it has played a vital role in his rehabilitation. Damian has used it every day as part of comprehensive treatment to retrain muscles and tendons in arms to work the way he wants to do. Using NHC Cyclo-Therapy® as part of his routine has helped him get function back in his hands which is helping him to maintain his independence. By undertaking his daily massage routine, including Cyclo-Therapy Damian is able to use his laptop, build Lego with his son and go about daily tasks such as making a cup of tea.

Following months of rehabilitation Damian is able to walk 200-300m on crutches and use a wheelchair for longer distances, but he wants to continue this further. Damian attributes much of his recovery to his positive mindset. He has used the commitment and focus, he once used to be an exceptional amateur athlete, to steer his rehabilitation and is committed to getting back to where he was physically, before the accident.

Damian's journey is not over, his hands may take longer to recover than his legs, because the injury location is where the nerves which control neurological capability that he needs to have for his hands, but daily use of NHC Cyclo-Therapy® along with other treatments has made a huge difference. He hopes to further improve his hand function so he can return to work as Managing Director for Personal Independence payments for Capita, something which he now has first-hand experience of!

His other goals include walking unaided the following summer and in 12 months he would like to undertake a park run.

Damian would recommend NHC Cyclo-Therapy® to anyone in a similar situation, not just spinal injuries but people who have had strokes, damaged muscle tendons, have ongoing pain and similar as he believes it to be integral to his remarkable recovery.

