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Thursday 15th September

was the moment **Edwina** regained her life. After being prescribed an advanced carbon fibre AFO through her Steeper orthotist Adam at Sunderland Royal Hospital, Edwina's mobility changed instantly. "The orthosis hasn't just helped me walk but has given me my life back. My gait is normal, my knees don't buckle, and my rollover is great. I can walk on uneven ground, walk on the beach, and it has made all the difference to my outlook on life and how I approach it."



Case Study

Edwina Freeman

“Someone recently told me that living with cancer is 60% in the mind, and if you can live your life as near to normal you’re halfway there. With the help of my AFO and Adam, I am more positive and for that, I am truly thankful.”



The story

A former Nurse, Edwina is fully in tune with her body and when she started to experience a variety of strange symptoms earlier in the year, she instinctively knew something wasn't quite right. After several visits to her GP and numerous tests later she was diagnosed with POEMS Syndrome, a rare blood cancer.

After a short spell in hospital, Edwina was initially seen by the orthotics team on the ward, as she was showing symptoms of foot drop, a muscular weakness or paralysis that makes it difficult to lift the front part of the foot and toes. As a result, she was very unsteady when walking and relied heavily on her crutches. In a bid to discharge her quickly from the hospital she was prescribed an initial stock AFO which allowed her to regain some stability, and provided the necessary support she needed in the short term to facilitate her back into her own home. Working collaboratively with the Neuro physio team as part of a Multi Disciplinary Team to create the best possible outcome for patients, Edwina was then prescribed an appointment as an outpatient to be seen by Adam, a member of the orthotics team later in the month to further assess her needs.

The solution

At her follow up consultation Edwina showed the following symptoms: weak quadricep muscles, she became very tired after walking a short distance and she was hyperextending her knee, something that needed to be resolved quickly as could pose significant long-term problems. As a result, she was measured for a carbon fibre anterior shell AFO (SpryStep® Max by Thuasne); this

AFO was deemed most appropriate as she lacked muscle strength in her quads and the AFO provided additional support on the shin providing maximum stability. As a higher risk patient, she was asked to come into the hospital for a follow-up assessment and with the team in full PPE they assessed her.

The turning point

Since receiving the SpryStep® Max and seeing Adam, the transformation has been incredible. She is walking quickly and with an improved gait, she is able to walk unaided, and the low profile design of the SpryStep Max meant that she is still able to wear her own clothes with the AFO and her own footwear. Being more comfortable and confident on her feet, Edwina recently added to her family with a new puppy. As all new pup-parents know the initial nights can be tricky, so for Edwina having an AFO that is easy and quick to put on has meant she has been able to see to her new pup through the night with full confidence that her orthosis will support her legs walking around the house and up and down the stairs.

“The orthotics team have been fabulous! Adam is so inspiring, and he has built my confidence up, for this, I can't thank him enough. The team are always encouraging. Adam informs me of the challenges I will face, but he makes me think that things are possible and that has given me a more positive outlook on life. He hasn't just given me an AFO he has given me my life back.” Edwina Freeman

To find out more about Edwina visit www.steepergroup.com