

# Standing Makes a World of Difference

FRANCESCA CAROLLO'S STORY



In May of 1982, at the young age of 25, Cesca started feeling numbness in her hands and feet. It progressed fairly quickly to where she was often tripping and falling. After three years of hospital visits and tests, she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). This was mainly because MRIs did not exist when her symptoms first started. She started using a cane, soon went to metal crutches, and about ten years later progressed to using a wheelchair for mobility. "I joined a gym to work on keeping my upper body strong, but in 1998 my upper body started to become affected. At this point almost every part of my body is affected by MS to some degree, except my mind...I think." Cesca says light-heartedly.

Name: Francesca Carollo A.K.A "Cesca"

Primary Diagnosis: Multiple Sclerosis – chronic progressive form

EasyStand Owned: EasyStand StrapStand

Standing in EasyStand Since: March 2006

Date of Onset: May 1982

Residence: Staten Island, NY



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### RESEARCHING STANDERS ON THE WEB

Cesca’s Physical Therapist suggested standing to help with the health of her progressing MS. She researched standers on the internet and found the EasyStand StrapStand. Cesca explains, “I chose the EasyStand StrapStand over the other standers for a few different reasons. I liked that I could use it with limited help, and stand directly from my chair without having to transfer. This was very important to me because MS is inconsistent, some days I can transfer, some days I can’t. The final reason, it looked like a quality product at a very good price.”

### USING MY STRAPSTAND

Because Cesca has a weak upper body, torso and arms, she needs some assistance getting into her stander. “The only part I need help with is getting the strap under my butt, I think a person with a stronger upper body would be able to do it themselves,” she says. “I am able to get into a standing position by myself because the pump handle is fairly easy to pull. If I can do it, most people could probably do it!”

With the EasyStand StrapStand the pump handle can be attached on either the left or right side. “My left arm is stronger so my handle is on the left side,” Cesca adds. She continues, “Getting down from the stander is simple, I don’t need help with that. It’s just a matter of pushing and holding the pump handle forward while my body eases down slowly until I’m sitting in my chair. I’m able to pull the strap out from under me by shifting my upper body from side to side while pulling the strap out.”

### WORTH PAYING OUT-OF-POCKET

After choosing to purchase the EasyStand StrapStand, Cesca called some suppliers in her area. She selected a supplier based on price and their willingness to assemble her stander. Cesca explains, “I had the money at the time, and thought this supplier’s price was very reasonable, so I decided to purchase through him. Also, he offered to deliver and assemble it for \$25. Since I had no one immediately available to assemble it, that option was very important to me.”

### NEVER SITTING TOO LONG

Cesca stands for approximately one hour a day to maintain her health. She comments, “Standing stretches my legs which not only feels great, but I’m sure it’s beneficial to my bones and muscles. My butt rarely feels as though I’ve been sitting too long and I never have to worry about sores or broken down skin. I feel my digestive process has improved and my torso has gotten a bit stronger.”

**CHALLENGE:** FIND A STANDER THAT REQUIRES NO TRANSFERRING SINCE MS IS VERY INCONSISTENT.

**SOLUTION:** USE A STANDER LIKE THE EASYSTAND STRAPSTAND THAT LIFTS DIRECTLY FROM THE WHEELCHAIR.

**CHALLENGE:** INTEGRATE STANDING INTO AN ALREADY BUSY DAILY ROUTINE.

**SOLUTION:** MULTI-TASK WHILE STANDING, IT SAVES TIME AND MAKES IT EASIER TO BE CONSISTENT WITH A STANDING PROGRAM.

**CHALLENGE:** FIND A POSITION OTHER THAN SITTING IN A WHEELCHAIR OR LYING IN BED.

**SOLUTION:** A STANDING FRAME PROVIDES AN UPRIGHT WEIGHT-BEARING POSITION.

## INTEGRATING STANDING INTO MY DAY

By doing certain activities while standing, Cesca saves time and finds it easier to fit standing into her day. She explains, "Since my time is pretty limited I'm always doing something else while standing. I integrate standing into my day by doing it while making phone calls, eating dinner, catching up on reading, or watching a movie or TV show that I TiVo'd. Sometimes when I have a visitor I'll hang out in my stander and chat with them in my living room."

## ENJOYING NEW HOBBIES

Since being diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, Cesca had to give up some of her hobbies like needlepoint, drawing, playing musical instruments, and scuba diving. "I had to stop skiing and sell my motorcycle, huge bummers," Cesca remembers. But she quickly found other hobbies to keep her busy. "I was always interested in the stock market and have been trading for the past year or so, now that it is so easy to do online. In that same vein, I occasionally go to Atlantic City to play roulette," She adds.

## OUT & ABOUT DESPITE MS

Cesca doesn't let her disability stop her from doing the things she loves, "I enjoy eating dinner at a good restaurant with friends or just having people over for dinner." Cesca continues, "I'm also a huge Yankee fan and watch just about every game! It just so happens that the Yankees have a minor league team where I live in Staten Island, New York. I enjoy going to those games, especially since the stadium there has a fantastic view of the New York City skyline! Even though I'm a native New Yorker, I can't get enough of that."

## CAREER CHALLENGES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Before she was diagnosed with MS, Cesca worked as an artist. Since then she has been unable to work but keeps her mind busy by learning and helping others. "I sometimes help out a friend of mine who is a court reporter by proofreading and editing court transcripts," She says. Cesca also enrolled in a Psychology Program through an online university. She remembers, "Ever since I was in my thirties, I've had a deep interest in the human mind and how different events in our lives make us who we are. I completed the program about five years ago and am very proud of this accomplishment!"

## STANDING MAKES A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Cesca is very positive and does not let Multiple Sclerosis limit how she lives her life. Instead she does all that she can to enhance it, like standing. She remarks, "My MS progressed to the point where I was either in a wheelchair or a bed 24/7. Now having that third option of standing, even on days when I don't feel well, truly makes a world of difference!"



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**STANDING PROGRAM:**  
ONE HOUR EACH DAY

### HEALTH BENEFITS:

STRETCHES LEGS  
PREVENTS PRESSURE SORES  
IMPROVES DIGESTION  
STRENGTHENS TORSO

### STANDING ACTIVITIES:

CHATTING WITH FRIENDS  
WATCHING TV  
TALKING ON PHONE  
EATING MEALS  
READING

### FAVORITE HOBBIES:

WATCHING YANKEES  
TRADING STOCKS  
EATING OUT

### FUNDING:

PAID OUT-OF-POCKET

