

GO ANYWHERE DO ANYTHING!

CRAIG KENNEDY'S STORY



Craig is and always has been an avid skier and outdoor activity enthusiast. During his second skiing season in Colorado, an accident left him paralyzed. Craig still skis more than 75 days per season, stays active participating in sports, and enjoys traveling regularly. "Standing helps keep my legs straight, allowing me to participate in more sports at a higher competitive level," Craig explains. He is also a very successful business man, working as an accessibility consultant, motivational speaker and published author. Craig and his wife Andrea started Access Anything to encourage and motivate individuals with disabilities to enjoy life, participate in activities and travel. They also want to raise awareness of the need for better accessibility. Their motto is "Go anywhere do anything!"

Name: Craig Kennedy

Primary Diagnosis: T-12 Paraplegia

EasyStand Owned: EasyStand 5000

Standing Since: January 2000

Occupation: Published Author, Accessibility Consultant, Motivational Speaker

Residence: Steamboat Springs, CO

Websites: www.accessanything.net and www.ckconsultingonline.com



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ACCESS ANYTHING

Craig and Andrea started Access Anything in 2003 by writing adventure travel guides for people with disabilities. “We realized that everyone has their own ideas of what ‘handicap accessible’ means and there is a need for accurate information,” Craig comments. Since then, they have expanded into travel consulting, ADA consulting, motivational speaking, and advocating for universal design and improved accessibility. Craig adds, “We hope that we are helping people realize that they can travel, have fun and play sports at a higher level than they think is possible. There are a lot of things out there that many people with disabilities don’t think they can do. We are here to teach them otherwise.”

STARTING SLOW, MAKING PROGRESS

Craig’s legs have been in the bent position and not able to flex fully straight for several years. He had to start slowly, not standing straight up at first, and work his way into a full standing position. “This takes a long time and I am still not fully upright as you can see in my photos,” Craig states. “Thanks to the advice of my physical therapist who suggested a standing program with the EasyStand, my legs are getting straighter every day.” After standing for a while, he found that it benefited him in additional ways. “The EasyStand also helped improve my bone density, now my bones are less brittle and prone to injury. It’s good for me mentally to know that I can still stand, even if it is with assistance,” Craig explains.

STANDING CHALLENGES

“Honestly, I am not always good about standing!” Craig admits. He stood in rehab and got his EasyStand a year later in 2000, but didn’t use it consistently for several years. “Each time I would go in for a re-evaluation at Craig Hospital my therapist would yell at me and tell me I needed to get my legs stretched out. I would do it for a while and then stop again. For years I was told I needed to be standing and was very lazy about it,” says Craig. Then in June 2006 his therapist recommended standing again and said that if he did it twice a day for a year, his legs would be nice and straight. “I made it about six straight months and was getting better, then had another lapse when I got married,” He adds. “Currently I am back at it again and trying to be good about it, but it’s hard because we travel so much.”

TRAVELING THE WORLD

Craig and Andrea have had the opportunity to travel all over the world (England, Scotland, Chile, Canada, Alaska, Hawaii, Mexico, etc.) and truly love it. “We travel for work and for pleasure, but we also travel so people realize that individuals with disabilities want to travel! It’s important to get out there so businesses see the need to be more accessible.” Craig explains, “I don’t stand while on the road, but I do lie on my stomach in order to stay stretched out.”

CHALLENGE: TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE NEED FOR BETTER ACCESSIBILITY AND TEACH INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OUT THERE THAT THEY CAN DO.

SOLUTION: START AN ORGANIZATION THAT ADDRESSES THESE ISSUES BY ADVOCATING FOR UNIVERSAL DESIGN, IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY AND PROMOTING WHEELCHAIR SPORTS.

CHALLENGE: STARTING A STANDING PROGRAM WHEN LEGS HAVE BEEN IN THE BENT POSITION AND NOT ABLE TO FLEX FULLY STRAIGHT FOR SEVERAL YEARS.

SOLUTION: SLOWLY PROGRESS TOWARD STANDING AT COMFORTABLE ANGLES UNTIL LEGS ARE STRETCHED OUT ENOUGH TO STAND FULLY UPRIGHT. BE PATIENT, IMPROVEMENT WILL COME.

CHALLENGE: MAINTAIN A CONSISTENT STANDING PROGRAM TO STRENGTHEN AND STRETCH LEGS.

SOLUTION: KEEP AT IT AND NEVER GIVE UP DESPITE BEING BUSY WITH TRAVEL, WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE.



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FUNDING CAN BE EASY

Craig’s EasyStand 5000 was paid for through Worker’s Compensation insurance. “I had my physical therapist at Craig Hospital write a prescription for the standing frame saying that it was necessary for my continued rehabilitation,” Craig comments. He was covered under Return to Work Workers Compensation of Colorado and always maintained a good relationship with them. “I have heard that other companies are not as easy to work with,” Craig adds, “It was easy for me to get funding. I guess I got lucky!”

POSITIVE ABOUT THE FUTURE

“I know that I will walk again someday. Standing is the best way to keep that feeling of walking alive in my mind and body. I also know that I could not achieve this goal with my legs in the condition that they were in,” Craig admits. Today, Craig looks to the future. “Now, I know when that day comes, my legs will be straight and my bones will be strong enough to carry my weight.” His advice, “Don’t ever lose sight of the future and the possibility of standing on your own again!” Craig Kennedy really does live by the words “Go anywhere do anything!”



“Don’t ever lose sight of the future and the possibility of standing on your own again!”

STANDING PROGRAM:

2 TIMES A DAY
30 MINUTES EACH
WHEN HE’S NOT TRAVELING

PHYSICAL BENEFITS:

IMPROVES BONE DENSITY
STRETCHES LEGS
INCREASES SPORTS PERFORMANCE

EMOTIONAL BENEFITS:

KEEPS HOPE OF WALKING ALIVE
HUGS WIFE WHILE STANDING
REMAINING ACTIVE HELPS SELF-ESTEEM

FAVORITE ACTIVITIES:

SKIING
CYCLING
CAMPING
GOLFING
TRAVELING

FUNDING:

WORKER’S COMP
LETTER OF MEDICAL NECESSITY