

# Hard Work, Faith, and Determination

MATT COURSON'S STORY



Name: Matt Courson

Primary Diagnosis: T-8 Incomplete Spinal Cord Injury

EasyStand Owned: EasyStand Glider

Standing in EasyStand Since: July 2006

Date of Onset: April 2006

Current Standing Program: Everyday with Electrical Stimulation

Age: 23

Height: 6' 3"

Website: <http://www.mattcourson.org/>

Occupation: Motivational Speaker, College Student

In 2006 Matt Courson was in his sophomore year of college and a former pitcher on the university's baseball team, when he was injured in a four-wheeled accident. "I was told by my doctor that I had a 99% chance of never walking again or ever recovering. I always believed I had that 1% chance, and that 1% was the motivation to fuel my recovery," Matt remembers. Since that day Matt has been determined to do whatever he can to walk again, including standing. "Standing was prescribed by my therapists. They all believed that it was very valuable to meeting my personal goals and the goals of their program." Matt learned about EasyStand when he was in the hospital in Little Rock, Arkansas. He recalls, "I heard about all the positives of standing, and I knew that I had to have one. My first reaction was that this will help give me the ability to stand independently again one day!"



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"I use the stander to do squats by working on pulling myself up. I also stand without any support from the back or front and use electrical stimulation on my quadriceps muscles to get a muscle contraction."

### FIRST STANDING EXPERIENCE

Matt remembers his first experience with standing, "The first time I stood in rehab, I could only stand for about a minute or two before getting light headed and dizzy. I knew that I needed to work towards standing longer to have any chance at recovery. So when I went home, I set a goal of standing for one hour a day." Matt went through his insurance provider, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, to fund his EasyStand.

### HEALTH & INDEPENDENCE

For Matt, standing in his EasyStand has been valuable to his health, self esteem and independence. He explains, "Standing allows me to stay in great shape, feel physically fit and increase my muscle mass. I feel like myself mentally, like I am the 6'3" pitcher that I once was." Matt uses his standing frame to do more than just stand, he also does strengthening and FES therapy in his EasyStand. He explains, "I use it to do squats by working on pulling myself up. I also stand without any support from the back or front and use electrical stimulation on my quadriceps muscles to get a muscle contraction. After just a couple of weeks, I was able to stand with a walker and bear my own weight. I credit the standing frame for my ability to bear my own weight without assisted devices!"

### THE REAL HEROES

Matt has gone through extensive spinal cord injury therapy programs at both Project Walk in Carlsbad, California and Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore, Maryland. By December 2007 Matt was walking short distances using leg braces, but some of his best memories from rehab were of the patients around him, "Being a former athlete, I thought the Michael Phelps and Darren McFaddens were the athletes and heroes in our society. However, after attending these therapy centers, I learned that the girls and guys putting in the time and effort to achieve common goals were the real heroes. Instead of scoring touchdowns or winning gold medals, these individuals were defying medical history by recovering from paralysis!"

### STANDING WITH THE RAZORBACKS

As you may have expected, Matt has always been a huge sports fan, especially baseball, football, and basketball. Matt remembers, "Growing up, my all time favorite athlete was Cal Ripken Jr. because of the way he always showed up to work and left it out on the field." Matt also loves the Arkansas Razorbacks, and recently got the opportunity to speak to them about setting goals and achieving the impossible. "During my speech I told them that I believed in them and that I will stand with them all year long, as long as they give it their all on the football field. So every Saturday this fall, I plan on standing in my standing frame for the entire 60 minutes of each game on the Razorback schedule!"

**CHALLENGE:** RECOVER FROM PARALYSIS.

**SOLUTION:** HARD WORK, DETERMINATION, AND CONSISTENT SCI THERAPY, INCLUDING STANDING.

**CHALLENGE:** INSPIRE OTHERS WHO ARE IN A DIFFICULT SITUATION.

**SOLUTION:** LEAD BY EXAMPLE, NEVER GIVE UP, AND USE YOUR EXPERIENCE TO MOTIVATE OTHERS.



“Growing up, my all time favorite athlete was Cal Ripken Jr. because of the way he always showed up to work and left it out on the field.”



“I feel like motivational speaking is a way for me to give something back. I don't charge a speaking fee. I enjoy extending the helping hand and helping others less fortunate.”

### FAMILY SUPPORT

Matt has a great family that has been by his side through everything, especially his father. He thoughtfully remarks, “My father is my hero, he has portrayed to me what a hero is. He would work his job during the day and at night come home and do spinal cord injury therapy with me for a couple of hours. He is truly the man I want to be someday!”

### MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKING

Matt's father also had a part in him becoming a motivational speaker, “The first words I told my father after hearing of my paralysis in the intensive care unit was, ‘I will not let this injury beat me. I am going to make a difference.’ After hearing these words, my pastor asked me to share my message with our church. After I shared my message, it sort of took off from there.” Matt appreciates the support he received and generously gives back through speaking. “My community, state, and people all over the world have supported me financially and inspirationally. I feel like motivational speaking is a way for me to give something back. I don't charge a speaking fee. I enjoy extending the helping hand and helping others less fortunate.”

### FUTURE CAREER GOALS

Matt is back in school at the University of Maryland where he is finishing up his degree in Political Science and plans on going to Law School after he graduates. He talks about what the future holds, “I am planning on going into Politics one day. I've seen first hand all of the tragedy and triumph Americans go through daily.” Matt shares what inspired this career choice, “After my accident, I met a Congressman from Rhode Island named James Langevin who had a spinal cord injury. I saw all of the great things he was doing despite his disability and it truly inspired me!”

### ACHIEVE YOUR DREAMS

Matt has some advice for others in a similar situation. “Never give up on your dreams! Sometimes life throws us a curve and this is the time when we have to stand strong and tall. Whether it's the road to recovery from paralysis or another situation where all odds seem against you, I truly believe that if you want something bad enough you can achieve it with the right amount of hard work, faith, and determination.”

### THANK YOU!

Matt is very grateful for the people & products that got him where he is today, “I do spinal cord injury therapy three days a week with my therapist Claire Green, who is the best therapist in the whole wide world. She is great! I would just like to say how blessed and thankful I am to have companies like EasyStand who go the extra mile to help me and others maintain and create a healthy lifestyle. I know for a fact I would not be where I am today without the help of the EasyStand. Thank you for everything!”

**STANDING PROGRAM:**  
60 MINUTES, ONCE A DAY  
WITH ELECTRICAL STIMULATION

**HOBBIES:**  
WATCHING SPORTS  
HELPING OTHERS  
SPEAKING

**STANDING BENEFITS:**  
STAYING IN SHAPE  
BUILDING MUSCLE MASS  
FEELING LIKE YOURSELF  
BEARING OWN WEIGHT

**FUNDING:**  
BLUE CROSS/BLUE SHIELD  
PAID IN FULL

**WEBSITES:**  
[WWW.MATTCOURSON.ORG](http://WWW.MATTCOURSON.ORG)  
[WWW.SPINALCORDRECOVERY.ORG](http://WWW.SPINALCORDRECOVERY.ORG)  
[WWW.PROJECTWALK.ORG](http://WWW.PROJECTWALK.ORG)  
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[www.easystand.com](http://www.easystand.com)