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Did You Know?

How Bicycling Saved My Life

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Cycling saved my life. Really. It did.

Many of us can make connections between events that we attribute to saving our lives. So many stories of how "exercise saved me." All those stories are true in a way. This story is different. Really it is. Or, perhaps it is the same. You decide.

I was in absolutely the greatest shape in my life. I was thin, fast and strong. My PR's and goals were all truly crushed. Yet, I had a problem. No more challenges. There was nothing left to prove to myself. I needed something new to feed my addiction to adventure and pain. Inevitably, my attention turned to that other kind of cycling. Not cyclocross. My wife won't let me ride cross – too dangerous (note the subtle foreshadowing). I turned to mountain biking.

I know what you are thinking. Mountain biking is not new. True, but I wanted to encourage my children's interest in cycling and a "new" sport means a new ride. Any cyclist whose significant other is not a cyclist understands my heavy implication.

Although I am always fantasizing about a new bike, it takes me a LONG time to decide to buy. It took a while but some good friends at my local bike shop helped me out and I bought my first ever carbon framed ride. A sweet 29er. It was awesome. Yes, I said "was".

I had the bike for a week and then I broke it. And me.

Wait! What? Yeah, you crashed, but didn't you say that bicycling saved your life?

It did.

It was a day in July. It was sunny and clear with the slightest breeze. Hints of sweet honeysuckle were in the air. It was a truly iconic day of summer. I went out on some local trails with my 10 year old son. Just to try out the new ride. Nothing serious. Not any of the stuff that I have done on a bike over the years. I definitely was not planning to crash. Hard.

The image is fixed into my memory. It was a slight decline. I was bunny hopping over some new gravel on the trail. Not too technical. Not too fast. Just quick enough to have some fun. My front wheel caught a rut. I saw it. I still see it in my mind's eye. It all happened in slow motion. I didn't panic. I never do. I tried to correct. I tried to save it. I see my wheel start to taco. I'm going down. I recall thinking "I'm going to break my collarbone" and "there goes the Marine Corps Marathon." "No, try to roll it off your shoulder."

It was bad. I remember screaming. My son later described it as a barrel roll with the bike still clipped in until about the third roll when it flew off. The frame was roached.

Guess, what? I didn't break my collarbone. I punctured my lung instead with one of my three broken ribs.

Did I mention the pain?

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An unknown runner was there instantly. I never did get his name. He came from nowhere. He helped me tons. You see, we were about a mile from the trailhead where my wife was waiting with my daughter. There was only one way out. I had to walk with a punctured lung. But my son was there. He saw the whole thing and he was afraid. Don't underestimate what you can do for your child. We won't talk about the walk out. Let's just say that it hurt.

Then, there was a debate over whether to go to urgent care or the ER. Can you guess where I wanted to go? Hey, I am a lawyer. We went to the ER. Little did I know the stakes of that particular oral argument on that particular day.

I was admitted to hospital. Apparently, they don't let you go home when you have a punctured lung even though I was feeling pretty good after a couple of ibuprofen. Unfortunately, the pain from the walk out was just the appetizer. The chest tube and suction to re-inflate my lung were the entree.

Anyway, I had to stay in the hospital overnight. I'd be out in a day and riding/running again in two weeks. No biggie, right? Not so fast.

You need a CT scan. Routine. Nothing to worry about. Just checking to see if anything important was damaged in the crash. I didn't think anything of it.

There was a doctor waiting in my room with my wife. He wouldn't tell me anything. "There's an area of concern." I am not just an attorney. I am a LITIGATION attorney and I wanted an answer. I cross examined him. I got my answer. He had told my wife first when she was alone in a hospital room. It was our thirteenth wedding anniversary but we did receive the best anniversary gift possible.

It doesn't matter what it was. I still don't like to talk about it. What matters is that it was bad. It wasn't related to the crash but it was going to end my life if it had not been discovered as a result of a bicycling accident that should never have happened in the first place. You see, I do not fall off of a bike easily. Despite all the crazy stuff that I have done on a bike, I had not crashed in over thirty years - not until the day when bicycling saved my life.

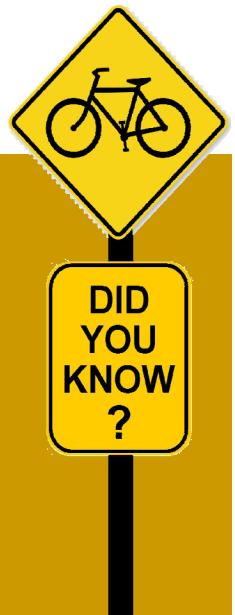
Until Next Time (when I share the secret of the best advice that I have ever given).

Do you need legal counsel?



Bicyclists have unique rights and duties under the New York Vehicle and Traffic law. As such, bicycling accidents are not exactly the same as the average automobile accident or negligence claim and they should be evaluated thoughtfully and handled in light of these differences. Resolving a bicycling accident claim can be an arduous and challenging undertaking that requires dauntless advocacy. After all, at the end of the day no one hires the litigation attorney to be a nice guy. Success requires setting realistic goals, intelligent tactics, meticulous preparation and seasoned, confident counsel. My experience representing both plaintiffs and defendants in and out of the courtroom along with my ferocious advocacy have made me a sought-after attorney for corporations and individuals alike. I assist my clients with determining their needs and goals. Together we generate strategies designed to achieve the best outcomes possible – all the while keeping the economics of litigation in mind.

How can I be of service to you?



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