



Johnstown Man Takes First Steps Aided by High-tech Orthotic Devices

Intelligent sensor system of the *E-MAG Active* is designed to learn user's gait for immediate impact on mobility

What began as a bout of pneumonia for 54-year old David Stiffler ended up a medical nightmare when he contracted a staph infection after being admitted to the hospital in January 2009. Thankfully, efforts to save his life were successful; however, the effects of the infection were severely debilitating and meant the loss of use of both his legs. David began rehabilitation in March, but the tremendous weakness in his limbs indicated a wheelchair would continue to be his only option for meaningful mobility.

That changed when he learned of Minneapolis, MN-based Otto Bock HealthCare's E-MAG Active electronically controlled knee-ankle-foot orthotic device. Designed with users like David in mind, the E-MAG Active controller measures leg position during walking and controls the orthotic joint accordingly, actually calibrating itself to understand how a user walks and adjusting itself to meet their needs. In addition, because the knee joint is controlled independently from the ankle and sole of the foot, patients such as David with no ankle functionality are able to use the E-MAG Active and it can be fitted to a wide range of users who have lost mobility due to stroke, polio, or other debilitating health concerns.

According to David's orthotist, Sam Calabrace of Svetz Orthotics & Prosthetics, the first time David used the devices it was obvious to everyone in the room that the E-MAG Actives were going to be life-changing.

"When David tried to stand without the E-MAG Actives, he felt his knees buckle and felt unsteady and unsafe. However, when we fit the devices he right away felt confident enough to stand, and by the end of the day he was taking steps. It was amazing to see!"

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Minnesota-based Otto Bock HealthCare LP was established in 1958 as the Americas corporate headquarters of Otto Bock HealthCare, GmbH, based in Duderstadt, Germany. Otto Bock has more than 3,800 employees worldwide and produces over 25,000 types of prosthetic and orthotic components, mobility and rehabilitation products, and is the U.S. leader in delivering continuous passive motion (CPM) services and related therapies. (www.ottobockus.com)