

# CLINICAL UPDATE

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CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION IN THE PROSTHETIC ORTHOTIC WORLD

## Keeping Pace with Sandy P.

Sandy P. has a daily schedule that would wear many people out just hearing about it. She's a full-time teaching assistant in the Scotia-Glenville Central School District, an after-school tutor, and a certified personal trainer at Precise Fitness and Training. In her "free" time, she's an avid hiker, biker and gardener. Oh yes, she also is an above-knee amputee at mid-thigh, but that doesn't slow her down a bit.

"It's hard to catch up with me," she admits. "In my time off, I'm exercising for pleasure or I'm cooking for a week so I can grab and go, but eat healthy too. That's something I would advise other amputees to do – to stay physically active and eat properly because all of it will make your life so much easier."

Sandy, who became an amputee at age 13 from osteogenic sarcoma, takes her physical fitness seriously. She became disciplined in exercise and healthy eating as a young adult and is now certified as a personal trainer through the National Academy of Sports Medicine. At Precise Fitness and Training, she enjoys creating workout routines and exercise modifications tailored to her clients and teaches a Ball and Bosu class.

"I had been going to Precise Fitness and Training for several years when the owner, Gina Sabatini, PTA, suggested I become certified. She said I would be good at helping others train because I was proficient at every exercise and I could explain things well because of the different ways I had to learn things myself. So she pushed me to go to school and I did a year's program in five months. It was in the summer when I had time off from school so I really plugged away at it."

Sandy eventually hopes to get certified to work as a trainer for the physically disabled. Her goal would





Sandy has been a family friend and a patient of Sampson's Prosthetic & Orthotic Laboratory for about 40 years, first seeing Bill Sampson Sr. Now she is a patient of Bill Sampson, CP, president of the company.

"In 40 years of being an amputee, I've worn just about every socket, knee and foot available. I'm finding that this HiFi Interface is working well for me because it feels more like a part of me," she said. "The biggest improvement I see is that it stays on through any activity where I am really using my legs, like squatting, hiking, and biking. Before if I was riding a bike, the socket would loosen and if I really sweated, it would slip off. It doesn't with this. I also am told that I am walking better. Bill timed me with the HiFi and he said I am also walking faster."

Sandy also wears the microprocessor C-Leg® and feels that the HiFi has helped her utilize that technology better. "I feel a little more stable. Before I used to stumble over the toe. Now I don't have the problem with stumbling. It didn't happen a lot, but with this, it's been less," she said.

Sandy actually does manage to slow down enough to enjoy spending time with her husband of 30 years and walking and playing with their three dogs. "My husband knew me when I had two legs. We had other relationships but I kept going back to him. He's cursed," she said laughingly. Sandy and her husband have two grown children and a grandchild. "They live nearby so the house is still full with people popping in and out," she said.

Sandy reflected back on her feelings when she was a new amputee. "The biggest challenge was mental – feeling like you're not going to be the same person that you were. The way I overcame that was sheer force. I mean, you have to go on."

She recalled an inspirational moment during recovery at Memorial Sloan Kettering. "I remember this

nurse at Sloan was real pretty and an amputee. She told me to remember I could do anything I used to do as long as I stuck with it. Here was this beautiful lady with one leg coming up to me and telling me that everything is going to be fine if I just work hard at it.

"That had a lot to do with my recovery. It's important to have support from your family and friends, but in the end it's all what's in your own head," she said.

"My advice to new amputees is that they can do anything they want as long as they keep trying and pushing themselves. It's not the end of the world. You have to try a little harder but you can meet every challenge."



be to do that full time after retirement from the school district, but that is still several years down the road. "That's part of what I want to do, to help others get stronger," she said.

Currently at Precise Fitness, she works with a variety of clientele from young athletes improving their strength and endurance to middle-aged women who want to continue to stay active and improve their muscle tone. It requires lifting heavy weights, squatting and demonstrating the exercises. Sandy has found that she can accomplish her tasks easier and in more comfort with a new socket system – the High-Fidelity (HiFi) Interface with OsseoSync™ technology fitted by Bill Sampson, CP.



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