

“The Sky’s the Limit” for MPI Patient Dave Stevens

Challenge: something that by its nature or character serves as a call to battle, contest, or special effort.

Meeting a challenge head on was Dave Stevens’ goal when he planned his first skydiving jump nearly four years ago. Dave, who became a below the knee amputee in 1980 as the result of a motorcycle accident, is an adventurer.

“The first jump was to challenge myself,” Dave said. “Immediately, I was hooked. On my first day, I jumped six times! After the sixth, they sent me home.”

Dave immediately enrolled in a skydiving course and one month later, he earned his license. He has been jumping ever since. With more than 3,500 jumps logged already (and 1,200 his first year!), he now holds a United States Parachuting Association (USPA) D License and is an instructor for other skydivers.



Requirements for holding that license are rigorous. The regulations require that Dave have completed 500 jumps, including accumulating at least three hours of controlled freefall time, made two night jumps (one solo and one in a group) with a freefall of at least 20 seconds, and have passed a written exam conducted by the USPA. But for him, it was worth it.

“Of course, I was scared the first time,” Dave admits. “But the dive is really the most amazing sensation ever. You don’t feel like you’re falling quickly because the plane is already traveling 100 miles per hour before you even jump. Relative to the time it takes for the fall, the acceleration rate is very slow. So actual descending is very relaxing for me.”

Besides individual jumps, Dave also is also a member of a four-way (four person)





casual jogger.

Besides his wife, Dave is accompanied on his adventures by his custom-made prostheses, which are fit and fabricated by his Muilenburg prosthetist Stan Vydrazil, CP.

Stan and Dave have a great working relationship. "Dave's been an amputee for 30 years. He knows what works for him and

what features of his prosthesis need upgrading when new technology is available," Stan said. "When its time to develop something new for him, we spend a lot of time together going over exactly what would be best for him. Then I go forward and fabricate his prosthesis using the most up-to-date components available to meet his high energy lifestyle."



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formation team. The group jumps from a plane at 10,500 feet and in 45 seconds completes as many 'formations' in the air as possible. A videographer with a camera jumps with them and videotapes the group in formation. They are then judged on the execution of and the number of completed formations during the freefall.

Being an amputee has never slowed Dave down. He admits, "I was just 21 when the accident occurred. For more than five years, I didn't even wear a prosthesis because the ones I tried were very uncomfortable. So, I just hopped.

"I finally went to a doctor who listened

leg so he can participate in all these activities without having to change his prosthesis entirely."

"Dave is really fun to work with," Stan added. "He always wants to try something new."

"Stan is a very skilled prosthetist and working with him and Muilenburg has been fantastic," Dave said. "He really listens to me!"

When Dave is not jumping out of airplanes or swimming in the world's oceans, he works in Houston as senior vice president of distribution operations for The Men's Wearhouse. He also spends time at area hospitals meeting young and recent amputees.

"I like to show them there's nothing you can't do if you really, truly want to!" he said.



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to me when I expressed my concerns. After some tests and a final surgery, the pain in my residual limb was gone and I started wearing a prosthesis full time," he said. "I had no problem adjusting to wearing one."

And skydiving isn't Dave's only adventurous activity, he also scuba dives and has explored many of the world's underwater reefs. His favorites are located in the Caribbean and off the coasts of Central America. He also plays racquetball and is a

Stan has fabricated two prostheses for Dave, who prefers a hard socket and one ply sock secured with a strap and belt mechanism. This gives Dave the right fit, level of comfort, and security he needs in his active life. He also wears various foot components for each of his high-action activities.

"Dave's running foot is an Ossur Flex-Run™. His walking foot is a Freedom Renegade, and he wears an Active Ankle with his swimming foot so he can adjust the angle of the foot to the leg and wear swim fins underwater," Stan explained. "His leg features a Ferrier Coupler, a two part system that enables us to fit various feet to the same



Renegade Provides Graphite Carbon Fiber Shock Absorption

Freedom Innovations Renegade and Renegade LP feature a combination of lightweight, high-shock absorption, greater energy return and forward stride motion. Designed for the active wearer but suitable to all amputees, the The Renegade and Renegade LP offer graphite carbon fiber shock absorption for high energy return and tibial progression - the natural ability to achieve forward motion (walk or run) with the least amount of effort. The foot weighs only 13.65 oz. without the foot shell, which weighs 71.6 oz. The Renegade's lightweight design is comfortable for everyday use. The Renegade LP is ideal for active amputees with longer residual limbs.



Flex-Run™ for the Athlete

The Flex-Run™, by Ossur, is a custom foot module for sprinting, long distance running and recreational sports. A lightweight foot, it provides efficient energy return, enabling the athlete to run further, and longer. Its vertical shock pylon reduces trauma to the residual limb, joints, and lower back, thereby providing more comfort to the athlete. The Flex-Run is made from 100 percent carbon fiber, a material used extensively in the aerospace industry for its superior strength and flexibility.

The Activankle for Swimming, Snow Skiing, and Walking

The Activankle from Rampro allows the user to swim, snorkel or scuba with or without fins, and easily locks into the walking position when finished. It has a protective neoprene cover to keep sand out. The ankle also can remain unlocked to flex freely on a single axis with no rotation or lateral movement. This feature makes the device beneficial for skiers because it forces no increased resistance in the ski boot as the ankle is flexed forward. The unlocked position is also useful for those who enjoy rowing, which requires an unrestricted ankle range of motion. The Activankle can be used with BK or AK prostheses.

The Importance of ABC Certification and Continuing Education

American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics and Pedorthics, Inc. (ABC) certified practitioners are recognized by the profession, educators and by those who supply the profession as possessing the highest level of skill, the most thorough education and the best training in the profession. ABC sets rigorous standards for their credentialed practitioners to ensure that patients are receiving the best quality of care available.

ABC certified practitioners are the only ones in the profession who are REQUIRED to possess a college degree, complete a one-year residency program and pass a challenging three part exam that includes hands-on assessment of clinical skills. They must also abide by the ABC Code of Professional Responsibility which ensures that all ABC-certified individuals are practicing in accordance with professional and community standards.

Not only does ABC call for practitioners to have more education prior to obtaining their certification, they also require practitioners to receive credits in mandatory continuing education once they have received their certification.

ABC's requirement of continuing education for all of its credentialed individuals helps keep them up-to-date and informed of changing innovations and new technologies within the profession. The orthotic and prosthetic profession is constantly changing and ensuring that ABC practitioners are educated in new innovations is of vital importance to the patient.

Studies show that continuing

education also helps practitioners become more productive workers with increased job satisfaction. While attending continuing education courses, practitioners learn how to prepare themselves for a successful career and many work to build a network of professional connections. The courses that practitioners attend also allow them to learn new skills which can help advance their business.

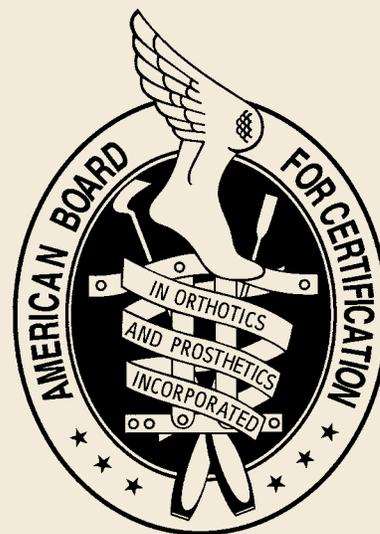
MPI practitioners who are ABC-certified include Ted Muilenburg, CP, FAAOP, Earl Fogler, CP, LP, Andre Martinez, CP, and Stan Vydral, CP. MPI is also an ABC-accredited facility, meeting and exceeding standards in patient care, administrative policies and procedures, facility safety, and

patients' rights. MPI undergoes a review by ABC every three years to maintain its accreditation. Periodic recertification of professionals and their facilities ensures that ABC's high standards of performance are continually met.

For those practitioners who have been educated in orthotics, prosthetics and

pedorthics, many choose ABC because of its reputation as the premiere credentialing body in the profession. ABC certified practitioners enjoy the highest respect in the health care community and their level of professionalism and skill is recognized throughout the profession.

This article was contributed by Katie Schaefer, ABC's Communications/PR Specialist



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Surviving the Holidays with Diabetes

For those with diabetes, the holidays can bring about different memories and emotions. With large helpings of wonderful food, odd meal times, and wide assortments of desserts, it can be challenging and frustrating to manage blood glucose levels. To survive the holidays without sacrificing all the food and tradition that goes with it, certified diabetes educators and diabetes coaches at www.Fit4D.com, offer some tips:

- Planning ahead is key. With all the wonderful holiday food to choose from, be sure to have your plate planned out in advance to avoid letting your taste buds take over.
- Keep your carbohydrates spread out throughout the day; don't save them all for one meal. Remember that your body likes consistency with carbohydrates to process the glucose efficiently and work properly with your medications.
- Take a walk after your meal to re-energize and help your body digest and burn off extra calories.

- Keeping your blood glucose and weight management goals in mind, try not to go to any holiday parties or events on an empty stomach. An empty stomach increases your chances of overeating.

- Appetizers, such as broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, and celery, are great low carb, low calorie options. Sausage and cheese have a minimal effect on blood glucose levels when eaten in moderation, but they are full of saturated fat and calories, so try to keep the portions small.

- If you choose to drink during the holidays, the recommendation is two drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women. One drink is equal to one beer, 4 oz. wine, or 1oz. spirits.

More tips on nutrition, and health and wellness, can be found at www.Fit4D.com.

