

# Charlotte's unstoppable journey

Friday 11th June

was the moment Charlotte realised the enormity of her achievements since her accident in 2013. Charlotte's journey has been nothing short of amazing. She was worried her limb loss would hold her back from doing many of the sports that she loved but, after working with the LPC team, Charlotte persevered and was thrilled that she could enjoy sports such as water skiing once again.



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## Case Study Charlotte Swift

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### The story

Extreme sports lover, Charlotte, talks about life as a below the knee amputee and her ongoing journey to stay active so that she can spend as much time as possible with her four-year-old son.

Before the accident, Charlotte juggled a busy life in London and worked full time as a journalist. In 2013, she was a passenger in a car when it crashed. "It was all very sudden. In a flash, my life seemingly changed forever."

As a result of the accident, Charlotte suffered life-changing injuries to both legs. At the hospital, she was told that it wasn't possible to save her left foot and she had to have an amputation below the knee. In total, Charlotte spent three months in hospital and received extensive rehabilitation which due to her injuries, was slow paced. "Everything I took for granted before seemed like really hard work. I was learning the basics of how to walk again, how to put one foot in front of the other. Nobody remembers how we learn to walk as a baby. It was a surreal experience."

### The solution

Following her discharge from hospital, Charlotte was given the all-clear and started looking for prosthetic solutions, with a priority to walk again and return to doing sports. After using an initial NHS prosthetic leg, Charlotte was looking for more from her prosthesis. She wanted minimal rubbing, a socket that fitted perfectly so she could wear the leg for most of the day, and a life-like cover. She began researching potential prosthetic clinics and after reading great reviews from other amputees, Charlotte contacted the team at The London Prosthetic Centre.

Charlotte credits Abdo, the lead Prosthetist, with providing her with more confidence. "I visited Abdo a year after my accident. He started by making me an everyday leg with an adjustable heel so I could wear shoes of different heel heights. LPC also provided me with a life-like silicone cover."

Charlotte was also fitted with a water leg with a personal touch, a tattoo of a swift to match her name, that she uses in the shower, when swimming with her son and at the beach. "The great thing about working with Abdo is that I can have a long conversation about the challenge I'm trying to overcome, and he really takes the time to talk it through with me to find the best solution." As well as getting back to skiing, running, swimming and cycling, Charlotte has tried some new sports, including rock climbing and triathlons.

She says, "Abdo made me think about my aims and challenges and helped me achieve my goals. He has enabled me to believe that anything is achievable."

### The turning point

A major turning point for Charlotte was when she returned to skiing for the first time since her accident. It was a very emotional time. Having skied since childhood, Charlotte was worried that she wouldn't be able to ski again. However, with Abdo's help, and her own determination, Charlotte has now returned to the slopes many times, using her customised ski prosthesis.

In June, Charlotte invited Abdo to watch her enjoy one of her other exhilarating sports, water skiing. Using her custom water leg, Charlotte was able to demonstrate just how far she'd come.

Charlotte's advice to anyone suffering from limb loss is to "take one day at a time and focus on small wins. Anything you did before, you can achieve again. It might take a little more effort and determination, but you will get there. It's about practice and perseverance."

It was important for Charlotte to return to normal life and regain her independence, without having to rely on anyone else, and with the help of The London Prosthetic Centre, she has done exactly that, and much more.



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