



CASE STUDY: CLARK HOEY

Clark Hoey is a 65-year-old who suffers from the effects of Parkinson's disease. Clark has a condition associated with Parkinson's disease known as 'freezing of gait', or FoG. This condition means that sufferers can periodically 'get stuck' at a point of walking and effectively mark time with their steps.

FoG affects around 28,000 Australians with Parkinson's disease. FoG can be greatly debilitating for sufferers as it greatly impacts their ability to move freely and conduct relatively simple tasks. This is Clark's story of managing the impact of FoG and the use of a new Australian product called Agilitas that is helping Clark overcome these symptoms.

Clark's story

Diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 1999, Mr. Hoey underwent Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) in 2008 to help address some of the symptoms. Although enjoying some initial success after the procedure, Mr. Hoey started to again see some of the symptoms of FoG.

"I began to notice my issue with my gait a couple of years after DBS. It gradually got worse because I stopped taking medication. Eventually I was having great trouble just getting around our home," said Mr. Hoey.

Mr. Hoey's symptoms were common to long-term sufferers of FoG.

"I just simply freeze. I just can't get through the doorway, for example. I grab the doorframe and just stand there until I eventually get going and I get through the doorway. That can be up to 45 seconds, so it's fairly significant," Mr. Hoey explained.

Mr. Hoey's issues with FoG were even impacting on his ability to pursue his love of gardening as even simple activities like pushing a wheelbarrow became problematic.

"If I try to push a wheelbarrow, it's really quite funny, because the wheelbarrow goes faster than I do. I become like a comic character hanging out behind the wheelbarrow. It's not really practical."

It also stopped him from pursuing hobbies such as woodworking.

"Trying to get around a shed full of tools gets to be a bit of a drama. In the end I just stopped doing it."

Ultimately FoG left Mr. Hoey with severely reduced mobility.

"I had considerable trouble getting around my garden, walking up hills, it's even made going to the shops difficult."



Working with Agilitas

Mr. Hoey was one of the participants in a trial of a new Australian-made device called Agilitas. Agilitas is a motion-sensing device that uses a patented method to detect when the user starts to freeze. The device projects a red laser dot onto the ground, which provides a visual cue to the brain to break the freeze and allows the user to continue walking. The device was envisioned in Australia by Parkinson's disease and neuropsychiatric specialist Dr Rodney Marsh and developed by Australian firm e3k, led by Dr Duncan Gilmore.

Mr. Hoey explains how it works for him.

"When you freeze, it's almost as if you concentrate not to move. Then to break out of that you have to concentrate to move, which can be a fairly extreme sort of a task sometimes," he explained.

"With the Agilitas device, the little flash on the floor just shakes you out of it, and away you go. "

The use of Agilitas has had significant impact on Mr. Hoey's everyday life.

"I think that one of the things it does, is it gives me the ability to get around the house a lot more easily. For example, when I was cooking there were times when I would ask my wife to get something for me that was just metres away rather than walk over myself. Walking was just too big of a drama.

"Now my experience with Agilitas indicated that could be improved. I feel more confident to move and get items myself. If I can do that, that is just wonderful. Just little things like that make a huge difference to a person's independence. "

And where to from here for Mr Hoey and Agilitas?

"With Agilitas you are just so much more efficient. You can do stuff. Not just getting around the house, not just in a shopping mall, even in a supermarket," Clark said.

But the final word should go Mrs Deb Lagden-Hoey, Clark's wife who has worked closely with Clark to combat the effects of FoG.

"I just feel that Agilitas really makes a difference. From what I've seen...at home in particular and even in the mall, there is a definite difference, thank you."

About Agilitas

Agilitas is brought to you by Bright Devices Pty Ltd, ABN 50 157 981 229.



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