



Jennifer's Story



The Accident Didn't Stop Her Adventures

Hi, I'm Jennifer Holmes, an outgoing and adventurous Marine veteran and self-described open book. My daughter is the source of my motivation to walk after a car accident in 2009 left me paralyzed from the waist down.

I was born and raised in Woodward, Oklahoma, where I currently live.

Woodward is a small town about 2.5 hours from the closest city and is has a lot of wind and wide open spaces. In 1999, I left home to join the United States Marine Corps, but a heart defect left me unable to advance beyond administrative duty. Three and a half years later, I returned to Woodward after being medically discharged. I would still be enlisted if that hadn't happened, my whole family is in the Marine Corps!

Less than a year after getting married in February of 2009, my world turned upside down when. On October 1, 2009 I was driving down a dirt road when my truck flipped six times, throwing me through the driver's side window. They don't know what happened. I was only going 45 [mph] on a dirt road. I broke my back in two places and shattered my femur. Couldn't move anything from the waist down.

I started rehab, which included learning to walk again using an exoskeleton. At first, I used the Ekso and ReWalk exoskeletons before my therapist introduced me to the Indego exoskeleton. Walking in Indego started bringing back muscle tone, feelings in my legs, and I've slowly regained muscle use in my legs. I qualified through the VA for my own personal Indego. Since I've started walking in the Indego and using it all the time now, I can almost get myself standing from a sitting position. Just using it, I've regained so much strength in my back, legs, and butt.

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I chose Indego because the ReWalk was bulky, you can't just fold it up and put it away. When you're





making transitions, you have to stop and download from the watch. In the Indego you don't have to do all that. The convenience of it [Indego] being compact, I can use it. I don't have to have anyone carry it. I can do it all on my own except somebody goes walking with me. I like the way the ReWalk moves. I couldn't get past how the Indego does so much more.

My hobbies include bareback horseback riding around my 40 acre farm with my eldest daughter, caring for my horses, cows, pigs, and chickens, as well as learning to scuba dive at a local dive school. However, my favorite thing to do is go walking at Walmart, I push the cart around. I have the best time. The cart sits up higher than the walker or crutches, so it is easier using the basket to keep me up higher. For exercise, I turn down the level of assistance given by Indego. As I get tired at the end of shopping, I turn it up to give more support.

I use Indego for grocery shopping, doing dishes, laundry, going to doctor's appointments, and family events. I love to stand up and do laundry with it because I can reach the bottom of my washer. Plus, I stand up to do dishes and with the help of this machine. I can bend over and pick stuff up off the ground with it. Last summer, I surprised my family using Indego at a family reunion.

My family was bawling, my two aunts were both crying, they were just amazed to see me stand up.

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My family was a nervous wreck when I was pregnant with my daughter asking "how are you going to be able to do this?" I told them you just take this one day at a time. I'm probably a little bit stricter. I tell my kids I cannot chase you, but if I have to I will crawl out of this chair and I will hunt you down. My kids do not run around or make a fuss in public. My daughter was almost 3 years old when I first started walking in an exoskeleton. She would pat my leg and say "c'mon momma lets go walk." She's been my biggest push to do this so I can go walk with her and go to the park with her. She helps me out so much. She's 6 years old but she acts like she's 30.

I recently hurt my hip after a fall riding my wheel chair down a ramp and hitting a rock I didn't see. However, I'm still going to therapy regularly and want to pass along a message to people who may be considering Indego- just try it once. When I first started walking in an exoskeleton, it was terrifying to take that first step. A lot of people once they get up, they're scared to fall. Once I got past that, man nothing really stops me.

My life is not different than anybody else's. It's all about what you tell yourself you can do. It's your perspective. It's how you look at it.

