



Jay McCutcheon - Active Survivors Network Founder

Jay McCutcheon has spent his life involved in health and fitness-as a professional and competitive amateur athlete, working in the sporting goods industry, and managing sports personalities.

In 2000, Jay was training to compete in the 2001 Ironman USA Triathlon and suffered a vertebral artery dissection resulting in a fluke but debilitating brain stem stroke. The stroke left Jay unable to walk, talk, swallow, and see correctly and he contracted aspiration pneumonia. He lost 40 pounds during his hospital stay and was faced with the arduous task of regaining the ability to resume as normal and active a life as possible.

“I went from training for an Ironman distance to not being able to sit up in bed - overnight. It was like getting old instantly. I was forced to see that life can bring you obstacles you are forced to deal with, but those obstacles makes you stronger. It's a gift really - I would not wish what I went through on anyone but I do wish people could experience what I mean by that,” says Jay.

During the following six months he struggled to recover, working with doctors and rehabilitation specialists. With his wife Kay, he brought the American Stroke Association's (ASA) "Train to End a Stroke" program to Baltimore and, in January of 2003, competed in the Disney Marathon and gave the ASA's keynote address at the pre-marathon banquet in Orlando. Since then, he became the first stroke survivor to sign as a Train to End Stroke coach for the fall 2003 season.

“I realized recovery is not a destination. In reality, Survivorship stays with you forever and so you have to take on the challenges,” says Jay. My Favorite quote is ***'After enlightenment, do the laundry'***, in other words after you find that balance in life - tackle the things that will make you better each day.”

Dedicated to remaining healthy and a competitive athlete, Jay and his doctors believe that his life-long commitment to fitness helped save his life and made possible his remarkable recovery. This belief in the importance of fitness in the recovery process and his desire to share this knowledge with other has been the driving force behind the development of the Active Survivors Network.

“After taking one of Karen's Flexible Warrior Athletic Yoga sessions I got inspired to consider adding Yoga for Brain Injury to our Fitness for Survivors programs,” says Jay. “The benefits of physical balance, improved flexibility, strength and an overall feeling of well being are so important for brain injury survivors. This Yoga for Brain Injury program will positively influence so many people.”