

A Journey to Regain Independence Results in Success at Bourne Manor



How It All Began

It was an accident that would change his life but not break his spirit. On the day after Mother's Day, 2009, 75-year-old Lawrence Hill of Falmouth lost his footing and fell down the basement stairs in his home.

Initially brought to Falmouth Hospital, Larry knew his injuries were serious when he was quickly transferred to Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. The diagnosis: a broken back involving two vertebrae.

After successful surgery to repair the damage, Larry remained fairly immobile while he healed. He needed a gastric feeding tube, inserted through his abdomen into his stomach, for nutrition. And

he had to wear a full-torso brace anytime he was helped to sit up.

Daunting as it may have seemed at the time, Larry was determined to walk, eat, and live independently again. But first, he needed specialized nursing care and extensive rehabilitation. That's how he began his rehab journey at Bourne Manor in Bourne, Massachusetts.

Multiple Therapies Make a Difference

When he arrived at Bourne Manor, Larry needed care from many disciplines. The coordinated care he received facilitated his recovery. Bourne's nursing staff provided Larry's postsurgical care,

attended to his feeding tube, and helped with his activities of daily living.

Physical therapists began by stretching and flexing Larry's feet and legs to keep his muscles active. After he was able to regain some control of his body's movement, he began using weights to increase his strength. Eventually, he began working on the parallel bars to increase his balance. That led to standing and then walking. Gradually, the distance he could walk increased.

At the same time, Larry worked with occupational therapists on building upper body strength, so he could perform self-care tasks. When his torso brace was removed in late July, his back muscles were—not surprisingly—significantly atrophied. Occupational therapy provided exercises to strengthen his back.

But Larry still had one more hurdle to overcome: eating. Larry's speech therapist worked with him to improve his ability to swallow. An important part of his treatment was VitalStim therapy, a noninvasive, electrical stimulation therapy that promotes proper swallowing. (Bourne is one of only a few skilled nursing facilities in the area to offer VitalStim therapy.) During the course of his swallowing therapy, Larry progressed from his G-tube to pureed food and finally to solid foods.

One Journey Ends, Another Begins

After making great progress throughout his stay at Bourne Manor, Larry was discharged on September 11, 2009. With his rehab journey over, Larry was eager to get back home, walk or ride his bicycle to the beach, and—most important—live independently again.

Looking back at his experience at Bourne Manor, Larry said, "The staff here gave me goals and motivation and helped me do it. I've surprised myself at how I've progressed." ▲



Walking Again

Larry practices walking with a cane, aided by physical therapist Nicole Gagnaire.