

Physical Training Gives Warriors a Fighting Chance for Recovery

SACRAMENTO, Calif., June 20, 2016 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- For William "Bill" Higgins, the prospect of a long recovery from surgery has him singularly focused on staying healthy and active for as long as he can. The wounded Marine Corps veteran has been attending a physical training program hosted by Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) for months now. With only two weeks remaining in the program, and only one more month before his hip replacement surgery, he knows the pressure is on to finish strong and give it everything he has.

"I wanted to get myself physically ready and pre-rehabilitate for this procedure," Bill explained. "I was strongly advised that before I get the surgery I should build up extra muscle strength to help with recovery. Wounded Warrior Project and its staff got me connected with this program when I needed it most, because once I get that procedure done, I will be recovering for a good stretch."

Bill was injured during a training accident over a decade ago. He suffered a hard landing from a helicopter, injuring his left leg and lower back. It slowed him considerably, but his determination and desire to keep moving eventually connected him with WWP.

"They contacted me in May 2015 about a series of nutrition classes that helped me get my nutrition where it needed to be, and as a result I lost 46 pounds in 15 months," Bill said.

Together with other wounded service members, Bill is participating in a weekly fitness routine that includes intense physical training and nutrition coaching. As part of its commitment to heal warriors in various stages of recovery, WWP works with gym staff to ensure fitness and meal plans are adapted to the unique needs of each participant.

"If I could describe the whole workout in one word, it would be 'tailored,'" Bill said. "All the men and women in attendance had different injuries – back, arms, legs, you name it. Every step of the way, the trainers were there making sure that we were improving our areas of weakness, helping us to get better. It was user-friendly, and it was not just some cookie-cutter class where we all have to adjust. They adjusted to our needs, and it made a huge difference on how we viewed successes and outcomes."

Bill participated in the training alongside U.S. Army veteran Michael Truong, who was wounded in combat in 2006. What he experienced while recovering from his original wartime injury in Iraq has motivated him to stay in shape and healthy. Recovery was a difficult time for Michael that carried a lot of uncertainty about his future. He still vividly recalls his time in the medical center.

"After first being wounded, I was in the hospital for two months," said Michael. "I wasn't able to walk or even sit up in bed. I've never felt that helpless before and was nowhere near a positive place mentally. When I was injured the second time, I had that glimmer of worry that I might go back to where I was, in the hospital bed. I knew I couldn't let this injury stop me from attending this fitness class, so I clenched my teeth and kept going."

Michael has made progress since he began training three months ago. However, the injury he is overcoming now is not the one that initially connected him with WWP.

The energy you give off can rub off on other people, and I don't want others feeling the negative mojo. I just want to deal with it. That's why I am here, right now, pushing through it and staying active."

Every single day, wounded veterans face similar challenges when returning to civilian life after military service - the visible and invisible wounds take their toll on even the toughest members of the armed forces. WWP meets warriors in various stages of recovery and provides health and fitness services that include weight training, yoga, cycling, outdoor activities, and nutrition workshops. Along with the benefits of living active lifestyles, warriors have the chance to bond with other wounded veterans and families to discover they're not alone in their recovery. To learn more, please visit <https://goo.gl/DmKT9n>.

About Wounded Warrior Project

The mission of Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors. WWP's purpose is to raise awareness and to enlist the public's aid for the needs of injured service members, to help injured servicemen and women aid and assist each other, and to provide unique, direct programs and services to meet their needs. WWP is a national, nonpartisan organization headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida. To get involved and learn more, visit woundedwarriorproject.org.

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<https://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/2016-06-20-Physical-Training-Gives-Warriors-a-Fighting-Chance-for-Recovery>