

## Wounded Warrior Reaches New Heights in Colorado Springs

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo., April 12, 2018 /[PRNewswire-USNewswire](#)/ -- Indoor rock climbing is becoming a popular exercise among injured veterans due to the complexities of the enormous rock walls and the reward felt when reaching new heights – or even peaking the top. Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) recently gave warriors the opportunity to experience this empowering method of exercise in a group setting.

"I deployed in support of Operations Sharp Edge Africa, Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom, and more," said Steve Dabroski, U.S. Marine Corps veteran. "My invisible injuries affected my entire outlook on life, but with Wounded Warrior Project's programs – especially those focused on fitness – I am putting the pieces back together after many years."

A typical bouldering gym uses no ropes, and the walls are usually 10 to 14 feet tall, which can increase anxiety in anyone ready to attempt the wall. For wounded warriors, the increased anxiety affords an opportunity to incorporate stress-reducing techniques and peer support lessons learned through WWP programs and services.

This rock-climbing clinic is part of the WWP Physical Health and Wellness Coaching Program, which is designed to reduce stress, combat depression, and promote an overall healthy and active lifestyle. Last year, WWP served more than 700 participants through its Coaching Programs, with nearly 60 percent reporting improved mental and social functioning.

"For me, the most challenging part of the Coaching Program is feeling vulnerable – I'm just not the tough guy I used to be," Steve said. "I didn't think these clinics would change my lifestyle much, but man was I wrong! I am cycling, working out, eating right, and going to therapy and other activities. I've lost 14 pounds and hardly ever pick up my cane."

In a WWP [survey](#) of the injured warriors it serves, 30.3 percent of survey respondents expressed physical activity helps them cope with stress and emotional concerns. Programs like this highlight the importance of managing mental health through physical activity and connecting with other veterans.

"The thing I miss the most about my service is the brotherhood," Steve said. "But Wounded Warrior Project brings that back at these clinics."

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