



Danica Barry
Not flustered by a spiral sequence
or her two little brothers



 **US FIGURE SKATING**

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A skating lesson

Devestating injury can't keep her down

Sharon Gordon grew up ice skating in New York as a way to combat her terrible allergies. She loved it, passing several high-level figure skating tests before hanging up her skates in college.

Little then did she know that her childhood passion for figure skating would help her “get up” from a devastating leg injury and surgery more than three decades later.

A serious athlete throughout her life, Gordon became enamored with rollerblading as a young adult. She’s spent more than two decades making the rounds in iconic Central Park. Her seven-mile inline loop served as ideal exercise and stress-relief for the now-57-year-old.

Adding to her competitive résumé, Gordon, a psychotherapist and daycare center director, recently followed in her 19-year-old son’s footsteps and picked up veteran saber fencing for a new challenge.

On March 31, 2016, Gordon was on her seven-mile trek through Central Park when things went awry.

“I stepped left to let a pack of bicyclists pass me and when I went to push off on my right foot I rolled over a twig and my right leg shot out in front of me and I fell to my left side,” Gordon said.

She pulled all three of her hamstring tendons completely off the hip bone. It was a crushing injury for someone who lives such an active lifestyle, as well as for her family. Her partner has multiple sclerosis and her son was about to graduate from high school.

“I felt bad because this is something I did to myself and they didn’t deserve this,” she said.

Fortunately for her, Gordon discovered a support system in New York that helped her get back on her feet. First, doctors at New York University Hospital performed surgery (April 11, 2016) when other hospitals refused due to the rarity of the injury and surgery, and her age. Ironically, it was her affiliation with fencing and NYU Hospital’s relationship with that sport’s national governing body that she was able to receive world-class care.

Gordon, who spent the first five weeks after surgery in a non-weight-bearing hip-to-knee-to-ankle brace, also discovered a rehabilitation program called Feldenkrais Method, which uses gentle movement and directed attention to improve movement and enhance human functioning. The program retaught her how to use her legs and move again.

The prognosis for this type of injury typically isn’t good. Studies have shown that 80 percent recovery can be expected after 18 to 36 months of rehabilitation for young male soccer players.

But after six weeks, Gordon got out of her brace and started walking with a cane. Slowly, she made daily strides and returned to a full nonimpact array of activities that included fencing, aerobics, Pilates and bicycling.

With the social media support of friends, family and those who had the same surgery, Gordon decided on Sept. 11, 2016, to face her demons. While she ruled out a return to rollerblading in Central Park, Gordon took to the ice once again in her mom’s custom Harlick boots with dance blades.



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Sharon Gordon

“I really needed to make peace,” she said. “If I was going to hang up skates forever, it had to be a conscious decision, not one forced on me because of my injury. Before the “Get Up” campaign, I would always tell people that I was a skater and I know how to fall down; I’ve fallen a thousand times. But I get up, figure out what I did wrong and do it again differently.

“When I decided to skate again after six months, I didn’t tell my Feldenkrais teachers or my family. I went to Chelsea Piers and paid \$10. I thought if I stand on the ice and that’s it, that’s good enough. If I skate once around the ice, that’s good enough. I stayed for 90 minutes.”

Since then, Gordon has skated twice a week. She’s taken edge classes with Ice Theatre of New York.

“The other day at Wollman Rink, I was the only one there at 6:30 one Saturday morning and I laid out a figure. It was gorgeous. The moon was setting, bird chirping. I laid out a serpentine, and every person who got on the ice tried it.”

Gordon, who the other day tried cross country skiing for the first time in Riverside Park, said falling down and getting up as a childhood skater was the best lesson she ever learned.