

# Orthologix Update

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*"The finish line is just the start of another race."*

## Orthologix Expertise Helps Amputee Runner Chipollini Hit His Stride



Amputee Denny Chipollini can easily run 25-30 miles a week and has competed in marathons and triathlons. But even for this experienced runner, age 55, there are still "firsts" that occur, and Sunday, April 19, held the latest. Denny, a fitness and lifestyle trainer, and motivational speaker, ran the Valley Forge Revolutionary 5-Mile Run in Valley Forge, Pa., wearing a new prosthesis he acquired through Orthologix, his race sponsor.

The exceptionally good fit of the prosthesis meant Denny didn't need to stop during the race for adjustments. Previously, while running a race, Denny would need at least one pit-stop for leg comfort, adding minutes to his race time. On Sunday, he ran the 5-mile race without stopping.

He completed the race in 44 minutes and 36 seconds, beating the average race time of 45 minutes and .08 seconds. Denny, the only amputee in the race, came in 474th out of 1,097 finishers, and placed 15th in his age group.

Denny, who lives with his wife and children in the metro Philadelphia area, received the new prosthesis from Orthologix in January, fitted by Jeff Shaw, CP. John Swoyer, CPO, initiated the meeting, CFab-1 handled the fabrication of the socket while Ossur supplied the liners and the foot. The team worked together to tailor the components Denny needed to accommodate his rigorous running program.


"Denny's main request was to have a lightweight socket that does not require the use of a knee sleeve or cause skin breakdown," Jeff says. "We decided to try the X5 Wave by Ossur. This liner has five rubber rings at the distal end. This creates an airtight seal with a one-way expulsion valve, eliminating the positioning effect associated with traditional pin system suspension. Goal one was achieved -- the limb stays in place and skin does not break down. Also, goal two was achieved -- the socket was made out of carbon fiber to reduce the weight. However, we still needed to utilize a sleeve to ensure safe suspension, due to slight changes in limb volume as Denny runs."

Jeff adds, "We went through three check sockets prior to final socket fabrication. Denny was able to trial these sockets each time until we achieved the right fit. He would use them on treadmills only at this point. His limb circumference actually decreased in size from initial visit to final product." According to Jeff, the foot Denny raced on, the Flex Run by Ossur, is a carbon fiber, energy-storing foot. It returns the energy that Denny puts into it. The Flex Run, used exclusively for running, is C-shaped without a heel or cosmetic foot shell and is approximately 2 inches longer than Denny's everyday leg.

"This is the best leg I've ever had," Denny states. "Technology has come a long way. I'm really fortunate to be part of this."

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Denny notes, "With this leg, I can be up there with the majority of the pack. I've never had a run like this. My goal was to do a 9-minute mile and I kept that pace. My goal, now that I've broken 9-minute miles, is to get to 8.5 and eventually an 8-minute mile. You always have to challenge yourself, or you go backward. The idea is 'what's next?' We limit ourselves only by our own minds," he adds.

## Outrunning Adversity

New achievements have become a way of life for Denny, who had both legs severed in a car accident in 1989 when he was 36 years old. Doctors reattached both legs but, 15 surgeries later, his left leg was amputated due to massive infection. Told by his doctor that he would never walk again, a determined Denny said, "Wanna bet?" Four years after that, Denny ran his first 5K race with a prosthesis.

Denny also contracted Hepatitis C through a blood transfusion. He overcame dependence on prescription pain medications, and dropped 55 pounds he gained during a depressed period.

In addition to Denny's sudden disability, he and his wife, Suzanne, had parenting challenges. Their son, Nicholas, now 19, has an incurable genetic disorder, neurofibromatosis (NF). NF causes tumors to grow on the nerve endings of the body internally and externally as well. Lesions can be removed, but usually grow back in clusters. NF carries along

with it learning disabilities, ADHD, and Tourette's syndrome. Nicholas also has been diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, a type of autism.

Because Nicholas faced teasing in addition to his physical problems, Denny wanted to educate the public about childhood disorders, diseases and disabilities, and to show kids there are "no excuses" for bullying and "no limits" to accepting and learning from others.

In 2001, Denny founded the nonprofit organization Generation Hope to raise awareness and understanding of disabilities and chronic illness. He shares the importance of celebrating diversity while motivating others to believe in themselves to achieve worthwhile goals.

"Everything that has happened to me I've tried to use in a positive way," he explains. "Life has been great for me although I've hit some tough bumps along the way. That's what this whole 20 years has done for me. It's shown me a deeper side of me. We all have that ability to be examples for others. Hopefully, I can motivate someone else."

Looking ahead to more races with his usual positive attitude, Denny plans to run in the Philadelphia marathon in November. He set his sights on that race because it's in his hometown and because it will mark 20 years since the car accident that changed his life. "This year could be pretty good. I think I'll probably be running eventually equal to what I did with two legs," he predicts. "Thanks to Jeff and John and OrthoLogix. They are pretty incredible."

