

ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT

CHRIS PINTO

ON BOARD FOR SUCCESS



By E.S.

***“Train as if your life depends on it’ is the mantra that I live by.
My life does depend on it because my body functions
differently than it used to.”***

– Chris Pinto

Toronto’s Chris Pinto, 37, is the recipient of a running blade from ParaSport Ontario, in partnership with prosthetic manufacturer Ossur Canada and Prosthetic Energy, a facility with two clinics in Toronto. Pinto is a multi-sport athlete who uses the prosthetic blade for running, jet skiing, boating, and working out. Pinto also enjoys long walks or hikes with his wife of 18 years, their 13-year-old son, and their American Bulldog.

Pinto experienced a traumatic injury from a motorcycle accident in 2017. Now a below-knee amputee, he doesn’t allow his amputation to inhibit his potential. Since the accident, Pinto found interest in other sports and ways to stay fit. He focused his energy on a growing adoration for snowboarding.

In 2018, Pinto attended a combine (an event where athletes are put through tests to showcase their athletic ability) in Scarborough. It was there where coaches from Para Snowboard Canada encouraged him to train for a spot on the Paralympic team. His first snowboard trip was to the Yukon Territory in 2018. This was Pinto’s first time back on a ski hill since losing his leg. Now, training at various ski locations this season, he will work hard to achieve the qualifications needed to compete in the 2022 Winter Paralympics in Beijing, China.

Pinto is determined to avoid any excuse standing in the way of his goals. That is his nature. When the doctor mentioned the likelihood of an amputation, Pinto made that decision rapidly. He explained the frustration of “sitting out for the next six months with an injury” and would much rather “amputate and get back to what I have to do.” Pinto went on to explain,

I follow two amputees on Instagram. One of them is Jose Luis Sanchez, an ex-military, below-knee amputee from Texas who owns a gym called Rise Above Hardship. He gave me the confidence to make the decision to amputate.”

Pinto has also found inspiration in Nick Charles, an above-knee amputee who received his U.S. Marines Underwater Operations Badge and was reinstated back into the military. The strong will and perseverance of both Sanchez and Charles are the qualities that Pinto admires most. He follows their daily workout routines to push himself not only to accomplish his personal goals, but also to maximize the use of the running blade.

The Ossur blade is Pinto’s first sports leg and he wanted something sleek. He attended several fittings with Marty Robinson, prosthetist and owner of Prosthetic Energy, for the correct measurements and quality of comfort. Pinto describes, “I was so active that I just wanted to get back out there, and Marty was great. The process was super easy. Everything was completed within a week or two. I did not have to wait a long time to have adjustments made.” He is grateful for Robinson’s proficiency and support during his prosthesis fittings.

Pinto also shared his appreciation for another individual, Aristotle Domingo, who has supported his personal journey. Domingo is the founder of the Amputee Coalition of Toronto, and put Pinto in touch with ParaSport® Ontario for the leg. Pinto was grateful for the opportunity and explained,



"I wish there were more people like him [Domingo] who would reach out to people and see what they need to succeed. There are a lot of people out there who are in worse situations than me and they need help."

Pinto acknowledges that while his circumstances are challenging, there are others who would benefit from more crucial support. Whether an individual needs a prosthetic device, sporting equipment, and/or assistive technology, a lot of these requirements are very costly.

"There is no point of doubt when you have been through something so traumatic and your only way out is up."

In addition to drawing attention to the shortage of resources available, Pinto expresses frustration towards the lack of inclusion for the disability community. He states, "I didn't notice it until I became an amputee, but there is not a lot of inclusivity." In an effort to build inclusion, Pinto enjoys communicating with amputees on a daily basis. He gets involved with the disability community from a grassroots level. Pinto admits, "I wouldn't take credit for pulling others out of a dark place, but I definitely help put

things in perspective." Through his mentoring, he helps motivate others to utilize their traumas and/or experiences to develop their best self.

Pinto's biggest accomplishment surfaced as a fortunate outcome of his trauma. Instead of allowing feelings of defeat to overpower him, he turned his emotions into fuel for success. Pinto explained that his experiences in life have shaped him into the individual he is today. "It is way too easy to lay down and give up," he says.

A few years prior to Pinto's accident, he lost his best friend on Victoria Day weekend to a motorcycle accident. His friend passed away in his arms. In memory of his friend, yearly for Victoria Day weekend Pinto participates in a Memorial Ride on his motorcycle. He experienced a lot of trauma in his life and the best advice he shares about growing from trauma is to keep pushing forward and never give up.

Pinto wanted to become a bodyguard, but he often felt as if his dream was unreachable. He was passionate about being a security personnel; however, it was always a continuous work in progress. He never actually pushed himself to reach his dream prior to his motorcycle crash. Explaining how his life changed for the better after his accident, Pinto states, "I was kicked into overdrive and any sort of risk, failure, or doubt was eliminated. There is no point of doubt when you have been through something so traumatic and your only way out is up."

Today, Pinto is a self-employed, security company owner, who manages and operates several venues across the city. He is a hardworking, career-driven individual striving to be the best version of himself each day. He connects with top security personnel and works with high profile celebrities and clientele.

Pinto is also proud of his "Get up and Go" attitude. He has an unrelenting drive for success, using his experiences for his own gain and for the benefit of others.

