



DOUG | my MS story

diagnosed in 1991

When I was diagnosed with MS at 30, it came as a shock. I went to the doctor because I woke up one day with numbness in my torso, like my waist was asleep, and wouldn't go away. Later I realized that my first symptom had come the year before, when I had blind spots in my vision.

I was stunned by my diagnosis because I knew what it meant to have MS – I watched my mother struggle with MS for most of my life. She had a lot of pain but always remained strong; she didn't want people to think she was a victim. When she was diagnosed around age 34, there was no treatment for people with this disease. She turned her attention to volunteering and fundraising for the National MS Society, organizing events to raise money for research. I still have some of the t-shirts from the MS Walk events she organized.



When I was diagnosed in 1991, the main treatment for MS was steroids. At the time, I was living in California, working in Silicon Valley on software development. I was athletic and I really enjoyed playing team sports. Ultimate Frisbee was my favorite, I played on a club team and enjoyed tournament play. When MS affected my vision and ability to catch the Frisbee, I shifted to soccer which was more forgiving visually.

My initial symptoms went away for five years and I began to wonder if my diagnosis was real. Then I had a relapse that really affected my left leg and caused balance issues. No more soccer for me. Nor any doubts about the severity of my disease. I've dealt with MS ever since, taking the best medications available to limit the disease progression.

I live and work in Austin. Because of MS I had to give up participating in team sports, but I've maintained a yoga and fitness practice through the years and have started cycling more regularly. I volunteered at the finish line for the BP MS 150 for a few years and wondered when I would feel ready to ride the route myself. I rode the BPMS150 for the first time in 2017. **I'm grateful for the medical advances in the last 20 years that have made it possible for me to be well enough to participate the BPMS150 again this year.**

bike
MS champions

Don't just ride, Bike MS