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Oregon Woman Becomes First Disabled Runner with a Spinal Cord Injury to Finish the World Marathon Majors on Foot *Six Races on Three Continents Completed.*

Turner, OR – March 1, 2018 – 39-year-old Wendy Garrett completed her sixth and final Abbott World Marathon Majors race on Sunday, February 25th in Tokyo. This series represents the six largest and most prestigious marathons in the world and includes both the Boston and New York City marathons. Out of the thousands of non-elite men and women who have finished all six races on foot, none of them were disabled—until now.

Wendy has always been an active person, filling her life with goals and athletic activities that brought her joy. After participating in gymnastics for 17 years, her energetic nature craved even more, so she took up running. What started as competing in various 5K races eventually led her to running in marathons in Los Angeles and Austin. Her life came full circle when she was hired to coach gymnastics on the tropical island of Bermuda. It was here where her life took a sudden turn.

In 2011, while riding to work on her motorized scooter, Wendy was sideswiped by a car, leaving her pinned underneath her scooter. After being helped from under her bike, she immediately did not have use of her left leg. When she received medical care and got her initial diagnosis of a sprained ankle, Garrett said, “I knew that my injury was far more serious.”

She returned home to Oregon and began an aggressive journey to find answers as to why she was left with a debilitating weakness in her upper body and the inability to move or control her left leg. Like many others experiencing leg-related mobility issues, she was prescribed a heavy, clunky boot for 3 years to help her heal and protect the range of motion of her foot and ankle.

This temporary fix was unwieldy, and she remained distraught to not know her true diagnosis. She sought advice from doctors and specialists, one after the other, searching for answers. Many deemed her circumstance a “medical mystery,” one for which doctors had no answer. With every doctor visit and no definitive diagnosis, her sense of who she was and the life she happily led

slowly began to fade for Wendy. Her desire to return to a vibrant life became the driving force behind this exhaustive search.

It wasn't until her 25th attempt that she found a doctor who properly diagnosed her with an incomplete spinal cord injury at L4 and a spinal syrinx in her neck. This diagnosis pinpointed that an injury to the involuntary muscles in her leg prevented blood from circulating in that area, resulting in a condition called Foot Drop.

Foot Drop is a form of paralysis affecting the foot and ankle, making walking and running extremely difficult (if not altogether impossible) without proper bracing. While it is not known exactly how many people in the world have Foot Drop, the condition is thought to affect millions of people, as it is caused by a variety of underlying conditions such as spinal cord injury, Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease (CMT), Multiple Sclerosis and Stroke. As challenging as these conditions are, it is the onset of Foot Drop paralysis that ultimately robs people of their mobility.

Through strenuous physical therapy, Wendy regained 75% of the use of her upper leg. This new accomplishment made it possible for her to be prescribed her first ankle-foot orthotic (AFO) brace made by Allard USA. After trying on the brace for the first time, she was finally able to go for a run. She called her family and friends afterwards with tears in her eyes—she had finally found a glimpse of herself again. Wendy's Allard ToeOFF® brace allowed her to slowly but surely rebuild the active lifestyle that was such a huge part of her life prior to her accident. Race after race, Wendy's confidence began to improve. Running in marathons, coaching gymnastics and even becoming a fitness instructor were made possible again because of her brace and the will to never give up on herself.

What's next for this "Six Star" Abbott World Marathon Major finisher? There are thoughts of writing a book, doing more motivational speaking and even climbing Mt. Rainier!

To learn more about Wendy's [inspiring story](#) and meet the team of athletes and everyday heroes encouraging each other and others like them to beat Foot Drop and "get back up today," visit the links below:

www.GetBackUpToday.com

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