

# Luke Soup

by Luke Anderson



"Faster, increase the tension, change directions, only a couple more minutes!" Sound like a work-out to you? Well it's a familiar tune to my ears and I hear it every Monday and Thursday evening at the fitness centre at Lyndhurst Hospital.

I have been a regular at the fitness centre since last fall, with the intention of developing my arm strength in order to reach some of my goals. Activities such as pushing a manual wheelchair, driving an adapted vehicle and just plain being able to brush my teeth by myself drive me to put in that little bit of extra effort each session.

Each time I enter those front doors at Lyndhurst I am reminded of my stay there. Some of the memories are good, but the bad ones are, unfortunately, the first to cloud my mind. Cafeteria food, snoring, obnoxious roommates and most of all, my horrendous experience of being quarantined for close to a month during the SARS outbreak last year.

But as I make my way to the back of the building, blazing a trail through dark and gloomy memories, a welcoming bright light shines at the entrance to the gym. Upon arriving I am greeted by one of the fitness centre staff or volunteers who help me remove my coat, an exercise that is

more often than not a workout in itself for both parties... bring on the warm sunny days please!

There are about a dozen staff and volunteers that are a part of the fitness centre and usually four or five of them are there each session. They are all awesome people, each one roughly the same age as me and most of them are students studying physiotherapy or occupational therapy. The majority are super social, really cute girls, a fact that helps fuel my willingness to go when I'm not feeling up to it.

So, once the winter garments have been removed, I pull up to what is called an arm bike to warm up my arm muscles and shoulders and get some cardiovascular exercise. The unit is basically a stationary bike, designed so that it can be pedaled with your arms and, like a stationary bike, it even has the same sort of knobby thing for increasing or decreasing resistance.

Since I can't grip the handles, there are special gloves that I wear with a velcro strap which, when tightened, holds my hands on the handle. After about 15 minutes on the bike I move onto a very medieval looking contraption. It involves a concoction of slings and braces that

support my arms, and springs which carry my arm weight; it kinda makes me feel like my arms are floating in water.

Getting set up on the contraption requires some patience, but is often the source of many laughs as the set up is slightly different every time. "Did we use these springs or those ones last time... how did we connect this again?"

The springs are hung from hooks in the ceiling and moving my arms back and forth, in and out and around in circles, increases circulation and helps me work on my fine motor skills. After 20 minutes or so, I do some sets of bicep curls with wrist weights and then go back on the arm bike to top off the workout.

There are roughly 40 fitness centre members with many different physical disabilities. Becoming a member myself has opened my eyes and given me an understanding of each and every one of these disabilities. Like most of us, I was so ignorant to all but my own.

These people are for real and all of their stories are composed of mental strength, courage, relentless persistence, love for life and everything else that makes the most battle-scarred warrior get back up after being knocked down. I have learned to look directly "in" to them instead of the common 'look "at" them' approach, which can be blamed for so many inequality issues.

We tend to let the barriers associated with things distract us from putting forth efforts to get beyond them... we aim for the goalie and not the net, when really if we aim for the net we are more likely going to score.

## Stouffville opens doors to heritage

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Stouffville's oldest church, its original sanctuary and furniture, and view historic displays and memorabilia.

### Walking Tour

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Historical Society has developed a new walking tour specifically for Doors Open. The Village of Stouffville (originally Stoufferville) gets its name from Abraham Stouffer Sr., a Mennonite immigrant from Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. What do we know about the arrival and early activities of the Stouffer family that led ultimately to the creation of a bustling rural community?

While visiting the places that are central to the story, the Historical Society's tour guide will tell you what is known and share some of the intriguing, unanswered questions. At Doors Open on June 5, you can join one of the special 45 minute walking tours, which start behind the Clock Tower at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

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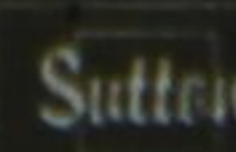


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