



Feature

BACK IN THE SADDLE

RETURNING TO CYCLING AFTER A LIFE-CHANGING INJURY IS DAUNTING BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE. REBECCA ARMSTRONG SPOKE TO JANET ATHERTON AND ANDREW MOULT TO FIND OUT HOW THEY DID IT

We've all seen stories of professional athletes returning to their chosen sport after a serious injury. As inspiring as they are, it can be hard for us 'mere mortals' to relate. Athletes are at the peak of their fitness, surrounded by the best medical, training and healthcare teams in the world. For those of us without these resources, the idea of getting back to cycling after a life-changing incident like a stroke or loss of a limb might feel unachievable. But, as the saying goes, nothing's impossible. I talked to two people who have experienced such an incident about how they got back in the saddle.

Janet Atherton is familiar as chair of Cycling UK's Board of Trustees. In May 2023 she suffered a mild stroke. After experiencing stroke, you can't drive for a minimum of one month. Naturally, she wanted to

know if she could cycle – at this point she was lying in a hospital bed and had no use of her left hand.

Andrew Moulton is a former Royal Engineer who had cycled since he was a boy. He retired from the army in 1984 after badly injuring his leg. At that point he could still run, but from 1989 his leg deteriorated. He had a stroke, and then a heart attack and pulmonary embolism. He was lucky to be alive but was confined to a wheelchair and started putting on weight. "I was sitting there one day thinking 'I wish I could cycle. I really do wish I could do some cycling,'" he said to me.



REBECCA ARMSTRONG
Cycling UK
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THE RIGHT BIKE – OR TRIKE

I've previously written about returning to cycling after an injury (cyclinguk.org/article/how-get-back-cycling-after-injury), and much of the same advice applies to these much more serious, life-changing injuries. However, cycling can be especially beneficial for ►