

YOUTH NEWS

Growing stronger



Gavin spoke to HFA about growing up with haemophilia and what he has learned about developing his strength and resilience. And his career plans for the future!

My name's Gavin. I am 21 years old and I have severe haemophilia A

How did you and your parents find out you had haemophilia?

There is no recorded history of haemophilia in my family – I supposedly got haemophilia due to a spontaneous mutation.

As a baby/toddler I was using a walking ring to get around the house, and the plastic from the walking ring bruised my ribcage. My parents were concerned so they took me to the hospital, where it was eventually confirmed that I have haemophilia.

What is your treatment like?

I have prophylaxis twice a week and I inject into a vein. The process of learning to self-infuse involved practising on a plastic model, followed by practising on myself, whereby I got into the vein the very first time.

Did haemophilia impact on your time at school?

Before prophylaxis I was very injury prone and had lots of spontaneous bleeds. I either went to school in pain or

had to take a lot of time off, which probably affected my grades although I didn't realise that at the time.

My friends and teachers knew of my haemophilia. It was important for them to know in case I happened to get injured at school. However, they still treated me normally just like they treated everybody else in the school, which is exactly what I wanted, and I am grateful for that.



Learning to self-infuse involved practising on a plastic model, followed by practising on myself



Gavin's story

Do you have a favourite sport?

I love playing tennis from time to time and in high school I loved playing mixed netball with friends.

What have you learned about managing your haemophilia to play sport?

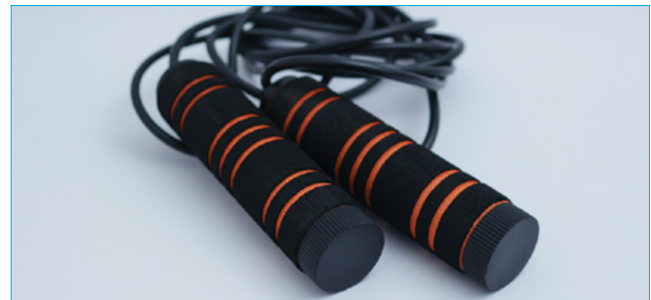
Of course, I am fortunate enough to have prophylaxis, which eliminates the spontaneous bleeds. Beyond that, it's incredibly important to do strength training, specifically in the legs, and really utilising compound movements in general. With the build-up of strength and muscle, the risk of playing sport is very much decreased. Nowadays it takes a lot for me to get injured in comparison to before.

What else has haemophilia taught you?

Haemophilia has taught me to be resilient, as the physical (and mental) pain is only temporary for me, as long as I implement sufficient recovery management. That being said, haemophilia has taught me to stay disciplined, especially with something like working out. Nowadays I'm much stronger than what I was and it's easy to skip workouts and lose sight of why working out is important, but the discipline I've developed as a part of having haemophilia helps me stay on the right track.



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Haemophilia has taught me to stay disciplined, especially with something like working out

What are you up to now?

I am currently studying city planning at university. Using my degree, I hope to encourage positive decision making in the face of sustainability, albeit through the avenue of city planning.

In 2020 I self-published a book called *Jake Raven and the heists of opulence*. At the time I just did it for fun, but I discovered that I have a huge passion for writing, so I hope to make a career out of it (alongside city planning of course). I am currently working on the sequel which I aim to finish by the end of 2023.

Read more

Do you have questions about building your physical strength? Speak to your HTC team to find out more and for an individualised plan. And check out:

- The Factored In sports info – www.factoredin.org.au/info/sports
- **On the move with haemophilia** toolkit and videos - <https://tinyurl.com/HFA-OTMWH>

Want to read other young people's personal stories about living with a bleeding disorder? Visit Factored In, the HFA youth website - www.factoredin.org.au