

*Providing care with
promptness, sensitivity,
respect compassion, and
integrity.*



**Don Garrison with Squirrel Hill's
Mary Ann Brown, PTA**



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Getting Back on his Feet with Rehab at The Commons at Squirrel Hill

Case Study

When you work as a roofer, there is always a bigger risk each day on the job. For 41-year-old Don Garrison, of Pittsburgh, it had been 23 years up and down ladders and avoiding life-threatening falls, until this past autumn. It was on September 7th when he lost his footing and fell three stories landing directly on his feet. While the way in which he fell may have saved his life, the damage to his feet and ankles was severe. Rushed to [The Western Pennsylvania Hospital](#), Don learned that his left heel had split in two, while his right ankle was damaged so badly that a bone graft would need to be fused-in to reconstruct it. After consultations with [Karl R. Saltrick, DPM, a foot and ankle specialist at West Penn](#) and its **Forbes Campus**, Don agreed on having separate surgeries on each injured foot. In the meantime, Don would need a place that would provide the right combination of skilled nursing & rehabilitation before, between, and following surgeries in order to finally get back on his feet. He chose **The Commons at Squirrel Hill** to be with him every step of the way.

Interdisciplinary Team Treatment Plan

Don first arrived at [Squirrel Hill](#) on September 15th, a week following his accident as Dr. Saltrick needed the swelling in his feet to reduce before surgery. Going through one surgery and then another, he progressed into a daily rehabilitation regimen to help him regain his strength, skills, and weight-bearing status.

Physical Therapy

- Without weight-bearing abilities, therapists worked on strengthening Don's legs with exercises, leg flexing and stretching to encourage movement and activity.
- As his left leg – surgically repaired in October – became weight-bearing, staff helped Don improve his balance, transferring, and ambulating with crutches.
- Don's second surgery was on December 31st. Therapists guided Don to increase his endurance with ambulating on crutches for longer distances.

Occupational Therapy

- Always strong in his upper body because of his occupation, Don said he was surprised how quickly you can lose your strength without activity.
- Therapists helped him regain his upper body strength with weights, work on transfers, and hand-eye coordination drills.
- Upper body strength is critical for ambulating when unable to bear weight. Therapists also worked with Don on ADLs to ensure a smooth transition to home.

Outcome: Don was discharged at the end of January and will follow-up with Dr. Saltrick to understand when he'll be weight-bearing again in his right foot. He looks forward to visiting his family in Tennessee and getting back to his routine.

In the Patient's Own Words: "They are great here. When I first got here, I couldn't move at all and look where I am now. Their attitudes are excellent, they are conscious of your well-being and very professional. I'd recommend it here."

