

Step on a Crack



“Break your rollator and your own back.”

I know the rhyme, but having MS brings this funny lyric into a scary reality.

Like me, you probably haven't thought much about that rhyme since grade school. But unlike me, you will probably never have to worry about sidewalk cracks ever again.

I walk with a mobility aid. We call it the Cadillac. It was \$480, and it's a wide body in every sense of the term. Perfect fit for my wide hips, glides like a paper airplane, and the seat has a perfect cushion. I splurged and got the velour accessories (anything for style, right?). It's navy, so its slightly boring in color. But its size says, “we are here.”

The point of a rollator is to protect the walker and reduce walking fatigue. It allows for stability, weight distribution, balancing and provides a much necessary seat for periods of fatigue. Over the past 3 years, I have transitioned to using my rollator 70% of the time when I am feeling my best and 100% when I'm symptomatic.

Specifically, one of my MS symptoms is foot drop. This means that when I am fatigued or when I have numb legs, I walk toes first instead of heel first. Basically, I fall all of the time. Mostly, I trip over myself, but there are times, many times actually, that I am tripped by an unnecessary obstruction.

So, about those concrete cracks...

Those of us who are differently-abled and who use mobility aids (like wheelchairs, walkers,

rollators and canes) would greatly appreciate it if safe paved sidewalks and curbs would become a priority. Navigating spaces with abled-people is difficult enough. The sidewalk cracks, broken gravel, damaged curbs are like obstacle courses for sure.

The wheels and bases of mobility aids get caught all the time in those cracks, and it is the scariest thing and almost always dangerous to fall forward and over your mobility aid.

Trust me. Zero stars. I do not recommend.

Sidewalk cracks represent the great divide between able-minded thinking and differently-abled thinking. Do us a favor and don't wait to experience it. Open your eyes to diverse perspectives and use your position and authority to help make lives better for others.

Oh, and advocate to fix these damn sidewalks.