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My Name Is Alison and I have been riding horses for 25 years. I am a competent and experienced rider. I have had the occasional fall - where you fall off, rub your sore bits and jump back on again without really thinking twice about it. That all changed for me on 9th February 2006, (" I thought I was going to die!") My friends and I were out hacking on a cold, clear, lovely winter's morning. We decided to go for a steady canter up a hill, Maureen my friend went first and then me – my horse threw in a buck which unseated me and I landed on his neck, I managed to get myself back into the saddle, but by this time Maureen was way ahead (unaware of what was going on), he bucked again and I started to fall off backwards, everything all happened in slow motion I felt a tug on my right foot, my foot had got caught in my stirrup iron (the safety ones with the bend).

I got dragged up the hill, with my body under my horse, all I could see was his legs thundering under me, I was trying desperately to free my foot but I couldn't, my body was writhing with pain, He stood on my left arm(humerus) it had snapped in half and was swinging, he then trod on my ribcage. The other rider Pauline who was there saw it all and was shouting to Maureen to stop as my horse was chasing her horse. I managed to get my foot half out of my boot and only then did I break free. My body rolled down the hill like a rag doll, when I stopped my left arm was facing the wrong way, my back was in agony and I had problems breathing.

Pauline was left holding the horses while Maureen came to my rescue. Maureen who is a physiotherapist, assessed my injuries and at all times assured me I would be ok. An ambulance was called for (we all carry mobile phones), but the ambulance couldn't find us and I lay there semi conscious fighting for breath for 90 minutes. Once the ambulance arrived they tried to inject morphine into my right arm, but I was so cold my veins had collapsed, my whole system had shut down and my breathing was getting more labored, they decided very quickly that they would not be able to move me, so they called for a helicopter. Once the helicopter arrived everything happened so quickly, they managed to give me morphine and they put a head, neck and a back brace on me, assuring me at all times.

I was diagnosed with a broken humerus, 4 broken ribs and a badly bruised body. I was extremely lucky considering what could have happened.

It is now 14 weeks later and after six weeks of intense physio, I am now thinking about getting back on a horse. Riding is my passion, there was never a question of not getting back on a horse, it was always when? I am feeling nervous, my confidence is low and my main concern is my stirrup safety and how I can eliminate this ever happening to me again. I have researched into various designs of stirrups. Then I saw what I was looking for, I was reading my old 'Your Horse' magazine collection and in Sept-Oct 2003 edition I came across an advert TOE STOPPERS which is an international award winning safety aid. It is a lightweight durable rubber which attaches to your stirrup iron; it instantly eliminates the risk of dragging. I telephoned the company who distribute them (Animal Crackers) I received excellent information and service on the product. I have ordered a pair and I am now feeling less at a risk and more confident about making the first step!

Being dragged by a horse is an extremely dangerous and terrifying experience; it is something you think happens to other people and not you!

I would never ever consider riding a horse without proper stirrup safety wear and it has only taken me 25 years to figure that out!!!

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