



Your Lucky Day

Ten years ago, my world literally turned upside down. I was riding in my best friend's SUV on a highway outside Hilton Head, South Carolina, when 5 tons of garbage truck t-boned us at 50 mph. In an instant, all I could hear, see and feel were twisted metal and chunks of glass—then pavement, trees, sky, pavement, trees, sky. The car somersaulted three-and-a-half times before skidding to a stop upside down on the highway. Everything faded to black.

The next thing I remember, I was strapped to a backboard, bumping along in a noisy ambulance. My body ached, but I could mumble a few words and wiggle my toes. I had a concussion, dozens of cuts, some needing stitches. I was alive. The EMT, a sweet-as-molasses Southern man,

flashed a big toothy smile and said, "You're gonna be just fine, Child. ... You better play the lottery today. Today is your *luck-y* day!"

It was my lucky day. I didn't buy a lottery ticket, but from that day on, I began making changes. A busy-but-inactive college student, I slowed down, and spent more time outdoors and with loved ones. I started running and biking, because it made me feel alive. I took risks, climbed mountains, tried adventure racing and began to see each day as a new opportunity.

Today's your lucky day, too. You don't have to endure a traumatic experience to gain a new lease on life. All you have to do is tap into this special issue of *Hooked*, in which we offer the tools and motivation you need to be healthier, happier and more adventurous.

For inspiration, turn to "Everyday Athletes," page 35, in which writer Evelyn Spence profiles four people who found the courage and energy to reach an exercise goal despite demanding jobs, family and health issues. Ready to get started? Our "Total Body Workout" (page 48) is a quick, easy way to boost your fitness. You'll need the right gear, so we've reviewed the best shoes (page 77) and apparel (page 82) for every activity, including walking, jogging, hiking, yoga and the daily carpool. If a change of scenery is what motivates you, try one of the outdoor vacations starting on page 57. From luxury spas to quick afternoon escapes, you'll find the perfect destination for your lifestyle and budget.

Whether you're new to outdoor fitness or your garage is full of well-worn gear, we're sure you'll find plenty of ideas and inspiration in these pages. But it's up to you to take the first step, so turn off the TV, kick that pile of laundry back into the closet and get out for at least a day. Start by visiting our Fit 4 Life Tour, a traveling fitness expo that will hit towns throughout the US this fall. There you'll find tools to evaluate your current fitness and nutrition levels, as well as sport-specific tips to get you off on the right foot. (For more information and tour dates, go to www.ruhooked.com.) Give us a chance, and we'll help turn your world upside down, too—and it won't hurt a bit.

—GINA DEMILLO
MANAGING EDITOR