

Limbcare Ray of hope for amputees...

By [Julie Spencer](#)

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Ray Edwards was working on a building site when he cut his hand.

An insignificant injury for most, but for him it was a medical emergency that led to the loss of all four of his limbs.

Six years earlier he had had his spleen removed as part of his treatment for Hodgkin's Disease.

He describes what happens next as "his fate".

He said: "The doctors told me my immunity system was shot and when I cut my hand the poison got into my blood system and that turned into septicaemia.

"My heart was trying to pump it to the spleen to get rid of it but because it wasn't there, it pumped the poison to my extremities.



"It was Friday 13 March 1987 when I lost my limbs."

Since then Ray Edwards MBE has served as chief executive of the Limbless Association, climbed Mount Kilimanjaro and endured and enjoyed all manner of stunts and spills to raise funds for, and awareness of, amputees.

He set up the charity Limbcare 16 months ago and wants to see it rolled out across the country – and even the world – offering what he describes as hope, support and advice for those who lose limbs.

A fundraising gala in Reading last month saw 150 supporters of Limbcare dance the night away to an Abba tribute band, raising £3,500 for the cause – and perhaps more importantly its profile.

The 57-year-old, who lives in Sandhurst with wife Fiona, says: "There are 5,000 diabetic patients who have an amputation every year, there are over 230,000 amputees in the UK and people lose limbs from meningitis, diabetes, motorbike accidents and bone cancer as well as birth deficiencies.

"I think there is some sort of fate in life and I am well versed to give empathy, not just sympathy, to these people – and not just them, but their families and carers."

Limbcare literature is now given to amputees after their surgery and it just takes a phone call from a consultant to get Ray to the bedside of a new amputee anywhere in the country.

His passion for his work has come at a price – in 2005 he had a heart attack.

But now he wants to recruit volunteers to help make his dream of a Limbcare centre of excellence, based in the south east, a reality, so new amputees have the support he did not receive.

"I was very bitter in myself," he says. "It was hard to accept and I tried to commit suicide.

"It was a tough call, a bitter pill, and I wish I had been there to help me.

"But I am very lucky. I love meeting people and it was my destiny to go through all that pain to help human beings."

Many of the core team of Limbcare are amputees, offering advice on everything from law and finance to building design and exercise and they are supported by hospital consultants who ask Ray to speak directly to their patients.

He says: "Amputees now have better prosthetics than I did – carbon fibre has made limbs light, with less strapping and modern technology and computers has made so much possible but it is still the fear of the unknown."

If you can help Limbcare

Contact Ray Edwards at www.limbcare.org or email at info@limbare.org or call:- **0800 052 1174**.