

It Takes Two



Dr. Friscia specifically remembers the holiday card he received from the Galtons, with both of them in casts and an ironic inscription.

When avid weekend athlete Gary Galton suffered a significant orthopedic injury, he and his wife Anne Marie hoped his recovery would be their only challenge—but it wasn't. Fortunately, Eisenhower and a good sense of humor got them through.

On a sunny Saturday in May 2006, Gary Galton and his wife Anne Marie were playing tennis, and Gary was guarding the baseline. Not anticipating a drop shot, he pivoted quickly. He heard a snap like a limb coming off of a tree and collapsed in a heap. The Galtons' tennis game was cut short and Gary returned home to ice the injury.

By Monday afternoon he met with his wife's chiropractor, who determined the injury needed more attention. "She felt an MRI and an orthopedic surgeon were in order," remembers Gary. "I just knew I had to walk very gingerly on it, and if I would pivot on the foot at all it would bark back at me."

The MRI came back with the results—a total rupture of the Achilles tendon. Gary knew who to call. "I happened to know a former administrator at Desert Orthopedic Center who was raised in the same small Maine town as my wife," Gary recalls. "He arranged an appointment with Dr. Friscia. I brought my films over and Dr. Friscia said, 'Guess what? You need a repair.'"

Dr. Friscia rearranged his schedule to fit Gary in for an outpatient surgery the following morning. By mid-afternoon, Gary was home and ready to begin the recuperation process.

However, as president of Accord Mediation, a thriving mediation/arbitration business, Gary was not used to sitting still. "You have to respect your body. I am very fortunate. Five years ago if I suffered an injury like this, I would have gone back to work. I had the choice to take four months off and take care of myself. However, all the down time was definitely something new for me. I read a lot of books, followed the stock market, and counted the days until my next appointment," jokes Gary. "Basically I did what I was told. It was a modest sacrifice for a good outcome."

During his convalescence, Gary tried to emphasize to Anne Marie that one of them had to stay healthy. "We have an agreement on that, right?" he assumed. One day in mid-September, Gary was preparing to go to the pool to meet his therapist for water exercises. Gary said goodbye to his wife, who was off to the tennis court. She soon returned to the house with her wrist looking, as Gary remembers, "swollen like a watermelon." "She told me, 'I tripped and fell and caught myself with my wrist. Don't worry, I'm right handed and I fell on my left hand.'"

"I told Anne Marie she needed an X-ray," says Gary. A friend took Anne Marie to Eisenhower Medical Center for an examination, and Gary's physical therapist relayed the results. "He told me, 'There are two things you need to know. She's going to be fine, and she broke her wrist.'"

For the remainder of 2006, the Galtons made the best of their unique orthopedic situation. "There was actually a two-week period of time when neither of us could drive. We had three arms and three legs between us. If it was an arm issue, I handled it. If it was a leg issue, she was in charge. You can be quite original and creative when you have to be," laughs Gary.

While Anne Marie still teases Gary for blowing their doubles match, the couple is thankfully back to their old selves and "castless." "We received such skilled and compassionate care. We pretty much have Eisenhower branded on our joints," Gary says with a smile. "We are blessed to have the finest care available to us here in this community. We would not go anywhere else."