Day 3,302 — Jets, Pads, and Discs

Keep plenty of pads on hand. You'll never know when you'll need them to tame a jet.

November 25, 2019 By Dan Zeller

This is the famous Jet d'Eau in Geneva, Switzerland. It shoots 500 liters / 130 gallons of water per second 140 meters/460 feet into the air. Keep that image in mind.

On Thursday, 14 November, I went and got my obligatory seasonal flu shot—a necessity working in a hospital. It was no biggie.

Friday afternoon, though, I was feeling a bit wonky—a bit of a chill and general tiredness—but it only lasted a brief while. I went to an event for work later that evening and did just fine.

Saturday morning was fine, too. I threw my camera in the car and I was headed out to take some photos. Before I got out of town, though, the chills and wonky feeling returned, a little more intense than the previous day, so I bailed on the photography and went back home for a quiet evening of rest just in case something might be taking hold.

Sunday was fine, but Monday at work, a sore throat and headache kicked in full-bore, and the next thing you know, I'm curled up in bed at home Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

The bug had me trying to cough up my toenails for the better part of those three days. And each time I coughed, there was a jet (see photo above) of something other than Eau coming out of my nether regions. Back into incontinence pads I went. And I went through pads like, well, pee through a man without a prostate. Not fun.

To add insult to injury, somewhere in one of those cough-up-your-toenails coughing fits, I must have moved one of my herniated lumbar discs around. (Old injury from 1986.) Now, in addition to jetting pee into my pad with each cough, I simultaneously send a bolt of lightning/pain down my right leg.

Let's just say it's not been the best of weeks. (Yeah, I know. Dial 1-800-Waaaahh!)

The cold is slowly relenting, and I'm sure it will be behind me by Thanksgiving. The nerve in my leg? That's another story…

I've been pretty lucky with my back over the years just by being very conscientious of what my limits and capabilities are. About 2005, though, things went bonkers with it.

It would take me 10 minutes to put a sock on my foot and another 10 minutes to put the shoe on, and the only position I was relatively comfortable in was standing. A series of visits to a physical therapist (including traction), did nothing to improve the situation.

I went off to a Harley-Davidson-riding female neurosurgeon to see what could be done. We did all the scans, and she found that a piece of my disc had broken off and was the culprit that was bouncing on the nerve to my leg. She refused to do surgery (risk > reward), but tried using a steroid injected into the spine to dissolve the piece of disc that was floating around. It worked and I haven't had any serious problem since then.

Historically, when my back does flare up, it tends to resolve itself on its own in a matter of days to a few weeks. This feels a bit different, though. It's impacting my gait; my right leg lights up when I try to take a normal step, but if I take about two-thirds of a step, there isn't as much pain.

Moral of the story: Don't get a flu shot.

Okay. Disregard that. Get your flu shot.

This is the first time I've had a reaction to a flu shot like this and, who knows, it may not have been the flu shot at all. It may have been just pure coincidence that I caught the bug around the same time I got the shot. I do work around sick people in a hospital and I take public transit to work, after all. Plenty of opportunity for virus transmission.

Time to pound down a shot of cough medicine and call it a night.

The real moral to the story: Keep plenty of pads on hand. You'll never know when you'll need them to tame a jet.

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