



CASE STUDY

Fitness Trainer, Trained in CPR, Helps Save Gym Member's Life



Dale Bierschbach, a heavy equipment operator in manufacturing, had just finished work and headed to East Howell Snap Fitness, in Howell, Michigan, for his workout. The 52-year-old had been working out three times a week at the 24-hour fitness center for the past month.

Before he began, Dale spent a good half-hour talking with Emily Jermov, the center's membership director and fitness trainer. After their conversation, Dale proceeded to the arc trainer to get in his cardio workout, and Emily went to get a quick lunch. After Dale finished his cardio workout, he walked around to cool down and catch his breath. Suddenly he collapsed. That's the last thing he remembered for 10 days. "I had no symptoms other than being out of breath, which I attributed to working out," he said.

"I never go out to lunch," Emily said. "I'm usually a packed-lunch girl, but I didn't have time to pack a lunch that morning. I was out for about five minutes, and when I got back, two members met me at the door and said a guy was down."

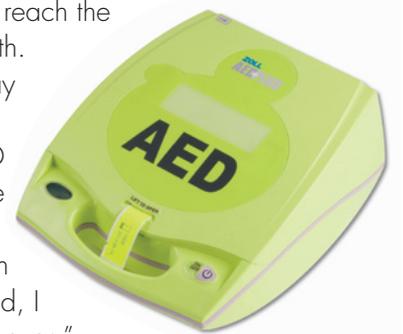
Having administered oxygen to a handful of members in the past, Emily grabbed the oxygen kit and headed over to where Dale was lying next to the arc trainer. Within seconds, she realized no oxygen was moving and that Dale was purple. She had a member push one of the panic buttons and call 911.

"I knew I was going to have to do something now," said Emily, who is certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid and is a former

CPR instructor. "I quickly began my rescue breaths and compressions. I then realized I had a machine that could help me." Emily instructed a member to get the automated external defibrillator (AED).

She continued doing CPR, then quickly attached the pads to Dale's bare chest. The ZOLL AED Plus® analyzed Dale's heart rhythm and advised a shock. Emily administered the shock and continued CPR until the paramedics arrived.

Less than 100 pounds and just shy of 5 feet tall, Emily spent eight minutes administering CPR to Dale, who is 5-foot-10 and weighs 240 pounds. "I was getting really tired," she said. "The AED Plus was very helpful. It said to push harder. In CPR training classes, the manikin clicks when you reach the proper compression depth. In real life, there's no way to tell how deep you're pushing. Luckily, the AED Plus could help guide me to get to the right depth of compressions. As soon as the paramedics arrived, I let the professionals take over."



Dale Survives Following CPR and AED Shock

Before the paramedics left the gym with Dale, he was breathing on his own. Although he remained unconscious, color was beginning to come back to his cheeks. Dale was transported to Woodland Medical Center of St. Joseph Hospital, where he

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Survivor Dale Bierschbach

was stabilized. He was then transferred to St. Joseph's in Ann Arbor for cardiac treatment. Dale's cardiologist requested the data from the AED so he could gain a better understanding of what happened to Dale's heart. The data helped him determine that Dale needed a triple bypass.

"The paramedics explained to me that Dale was dead," Emily said. "If we hadn't performed CPR and if the AED hadn't been there to restart his heart, he would have remained dead. Dale had an erratic heart rhythm that only defibrillation and high-quality CPR could have helped. It was absolutely terrifying at the time."

Being a first responder, Emily knew the importance of AEDs. "Even if you aren't confident on how to use an AED, it will tell you what to do. The AED Plus has pictures and it prompts you through the rescue. If something happens, you have peace of mind that it is there. My dad's a paramedic and a firefighter, so I have observed that what can go wrong usually will go wrong. It's always good to play it safe."

Dale also understands the significance of AEDs. "My rhythm did not return to normal with CPR alone," he said. "It was only after the shock of the AED that my rhythm became stable enough to support life. Without immediate access to the AED, I would be dead. Thank God that Emily took the time to receive the training and didn't allow fear to paralyze her."

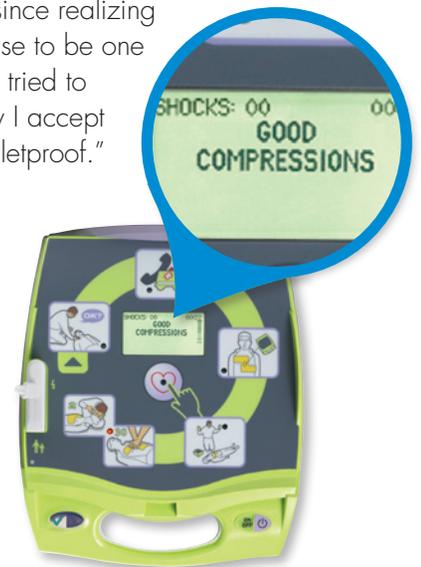
"The cool thing is," added Emily, "your training takes over, but in your mind you are freaking out. It is an out-of-body experience. I kept talking to myself, saying, 'Oh my gosh, what is going on? Calm down. You're a powerhouse. You've got this. Calm down.' People must have thought I was crazy."

Dale Returns to Working Out

Within a few months after his cardiac arrest, Dale was back at the gym working out with a personal trainer. Following his bypass surgery, Dale had physical therapy, which he said has helped him identify safe parameters for exercise. He also wears a heart monitor when exercising, which makes him feel more confident.

"I watch Dale like a hawk now," said Emily. "I tell him, 'I saved you and I don't want to have to do it again, so take it easy.' But he knows his limits." Dale says, "I have developed more realistic goals and timelines for my exercise and health since realizing my human limitations. I use to be one of those aging men who tried to deny getting older. Now I accept that I am not 22 and bulletproof."

The ZOLL AED Plus, the first and only Full-Rescue AED that provides Real CPR Help® for depth and rate of chest compressions, audibly coaches rescuers with prompts that say "Push Harder" or "Good Compressions" during CPR.



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