

A Paralyzed Man Can Walk Naturally Again With Brain and Spine Implants

Gert-Jan Oskam was living in China in 2011 when he was in a motorcycle accident that left him paralyzed from the hips down. Now, with a combination of devices, scientists have given him control over his lower body again.

“For 12 years I’ve been trying to get back my feet,” Mr. Oskam said in a press briefing on Tuesday. “Now I have learned how to walk normal, natural.”

In a study published on Wednesday in the journal *Nature*, researchers in Switzerland described implants that provided a “digital bridge” between Mr. Oskam’s brain and his spinal cord, bypassing injured sections. The discovery allowed Mr. Oskam, 40, to stand, walk and ascend a steep ramp with only the assistance of a walker. More than a year after the implant was inserted, he has retained these abilities and has actually showed signs of neurological recovery, walking with crutches even when the implant was switched off.

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