



[Spinal Cord Injuries: Car Accidents and Other Causes](#)

by [John Demas](#) on 12/08/09 at 4:56 pm

Overview

We frequently only hear about spinal cord injuries (SCI's) when a famous athlete or celebrity suffers a serious sports accident. Football players, horseback riders, mountain climbers and others often suffer serious falls or are hit by others during a contact sports game. However, spinal cord injuries are most often caused by vehicular accidents. In fact, according to a 2009 Spinal Cord Injury Information Network publication:

- Vehicular accidents account for about 42.1 % of all annual spinal cord injuries;
- Falls cause about 26.7% of these injuries;
- Acts of violence cause 15.1 % of spinal cord injuries; and
- Sporting accidents cause about 7.6% of these bodily injuries.
- The causation of the remaining 8.6% of these injuries is not fully known.

Hopefully, by keeping these statistics in mind, we'll each take extra steps to avoid becoming a spinal cord injury statistic. As regular commuters, drivers, passengers, pedestrians and sports enthusiasts, we are all quite vulnerable to this type of injury. (See the Mayo Clinic's definitions and added information about spinal cord injuries.)

High-Risk Groups

These next statistics should further alert those who are members of the highest, at-risk groups for suffering spinal cord injuries:

- Certain racial and ethnic groups — Today, White or Caucasian individuals account for approximately 66.1 % of those afflicted by SCI's. (At one point during the 1970s, Caucasians accounted for 76.8 % of these injuries.) African-Americans currently sustain 27.1 % of all annual spinal cord injuries. (They only accounted for about 14 % during one period in the 1970s). Hispanics, Asians and others sustain spinal cord injuries at a far lower statistical level (below 10 %) than Caucasians and African Americans each year.

- Employed individuals account for more than half of those afflicted with a new spinal cord injury (SCI);
- Single people sustain more than half of all the new SCI's each year;
- Men develop 81 % of each year's new spinal cord injuries;
- Individuals at or near the age of 40 are now most likely to develop a spinal cord injury (that's a considerably higher average age than was true in the late 1970s - at that time, the average afflicted person was in his or her late twenties).

With approximately 12,000 new people suffering spinal cord injuries each year, it's surprising that we don't see more of them in public. (It's currently estimated that between 229,000 to 306,000 Americans are now living with this type of disability).

Suggested Ways to Avoid Sustaining a Spinal Cord Injury

Given the large number of Americans currently struggling with a spinal cord injury, it's imperative for the rest of us to remain as healthy and able-bodied as possible.

The following suggestions should help each of us stay healthy and whole:

1. Always wear the safest protective gear when playing any type of sport. Never forget to wear a helmet;
2. Minimize your time spent driving (or walking as a pedestrian) on crowded streets. Choose low-traffic times to handle all of your errands.
3. Consider taking a defensive driving course. Your car insurance company can tell you which online courses it honors. Check ahead of time on the rate discount you can expect if you pass the course. Often, these discounts will last for two or three years.
4. Give serious thought to only driving an average-sized vehicle (compared to those you normally meet up with on the road). Getting high mileage out of a small car won't mean very much if it increases your chances of suffering a spinal cord (or other serious) injury. Also, always wear your seatbelt.
5. Avoid walking or driving through the more violent parts of town - find alternative routes. Many spinal cord injuries are caused by gunshot wounds.

Our law firm hopes this article has motivated you to take every reasonable precaution you can to avoid ever suffering anything as serious as a spinal cord injury. You really can add more safety to your life by making just a few lifestyle changes.

If you are currently suffering from a spinal cord injury and need the help of a highly experienced law firm on your side, we hope you'll contact us. We've been successfully representing clients with such serious injuries for many years.