

Riding 9000 kilometers for stroke awareness - Tommy Quick

15 years after the stroke, 27-year-old Tommy Quick decided to ride more than 9000 kilometers or 5592 miles on an epic year-long journey to challenge himself and raise money for stroke research.

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www.the4points.org/

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Tommy 0:00

Then from there, we go up to Cape Byron to Byron Bay, and then on to Cape York, all in all it'll be 9000 plus kilometers.

Bill 0:15

9000 kilometers. So it's going to take you from the left of Australia, the west of Australia, right to the right side of Australia. And then it's going to take you up to the top of Australia once you go down to the bottom of Australia. So man, that just looks really that doesn't look like anyone should be doing that, under any circumstances.

Bill 0:40

I'm looking at that map and just trying to work out how massive it is. That's like going from California, right down to the bottom of the US and then up to New York. That's similar kind of route that you're taking, isn't it?

Intro 1:01

This is the recovery after stroke podcast, with Bill Gasiamise helping you navigate recovery after stroke.

Introduction



Bill 1:14

Bill from recoveryafterstroke.com This is Episode 143. And my guest today is Tommy Quick. Tommy experienced a stroke aged 12 and has had to overcome a lot of adversity, as well as overcoming aphasia.

Bill 1:28

Now 15 years after the stroke, Tommy has decided to ride from the west coast of Australia to the east coast of Australia, and then up to the north coast, in the hope of raising a million dollars for the Stroke Foundation.

Bill 1:41

Tommy will ride more than 9000 kilometers or 5592 miles and is expecting that the ride will take more than a year. To find out more and to follow Tommy, you can go to www.the4points.org.

Bill 2:00

If you have enjoyed any of the recovery after stroke podcast interviews, please

share your favorite episode on social media. Give the show a five-star review on iTunes. And if you're watching on YouTube, please give the episode a thumbs up and subscribe to be notified of new interviews.

Bill 2:19

Your support with this will make it easier for other survivors to find the show and perhaps feel better about the situation they find themselves in. Thanks so much for listening, and now it's on with the show.

Bill 2:30

Tommy Quick. Welcome to the podcast.

Tommy 2:34

Hello Bill how are you?

Bill 2:36

I'm well, mate thanks for being here. I really appreciate it man. I thought I'd get in touch with you because you're about to do something crazy. You're about to do a ride called 4 Points of Australia. And before we talk about that, can you tell me a little bit about what happened to you? And how you got to this stage of deciding that you're going to ride a bike all over Australia.

Tommy Quick had a stroke at the age of 12



Tommy 3:08

Where to start? That's a good question. So I'll go back to the beginning. I had a stroke when was 12 I just woke up one morning. I thought I had a headache, went to see my parents told my mom I have a headache and she went to get some aspirin or something like that.

Tommy 3:50

She came back she gave me some, and I drank some probably start (inaudible) like you know, any pills like that tastes like tastes just disgusting. And then five minutes later, I was unconscious and woke up two days later, from an induced coma.

Bill 4:31

How old were you?

Tommy 4:33

I was 12 I just started High School in 2006.

Bill 4:48

So all you remember is you had a headache. You went to mum, she gave you what most mums give to their kids when they say they got a headache like a Panadol which is a paracetamol tablet or Disprin, which is kind of something similar, that you dissolve in water tastes disgusting. And then the next thing you remember is waking up five weeks later out of an induced coma.

Tommy 5:13

Yeah, it was very scary, like, just before I was unconscious I was literally screaming my head off, and then I just shut down my body shut down unconscious. And that was probably the scariest point.

Bill 5:56

Tell me what caused that headache? What was the reason that that headache happened?

Tommy 6:06

The doctors said I had an AVM but I don't know what caused it, they said it was the size of a golf ball.

Bill 6:40

So you had an AVM, it bled, and it caused a blood mass in your head, which was the size of a golf ball man that's similar to me. I'm familiar, very familiar with that process. It happened to me when I was 37.

Bill 6:47

You were 12. And when you woke up five weeks later, what were the challenges

that you now had? Because I had issues with my ability to walk, memory, the whole lot. what kind of challenges did you face after you woke up?

Tommy 7:17

One believing that it was real. Like, honestly, I thought it was in a video game. Like you press that button, everything goes back to normal. That was probably the first part. Like answering the question why did it happen today? Which is similar to video game?

Tommy 7:51

Like why did it happen to me? What reason was that I should have this stroke? And then I had to re-learn everything from walking to talking and talking was the most affected area of the brain apparently.

Tommy 8:24

I remember I wanted to talk so that, and I was also very negative. I would say no to everything as well, I will say was no. say well, and we'll talk tracheotomy. David Burns head up. I got the baby pretty much.

Bill 9:21

You have to basically start from scratch and learn how to walk talk. Move your head sit up the works.

Tommy 9:28

Yep, the works. Is that similar to you?

Bill 9:33

No, I didn't have that such a dramatic issue with why talking. Walking was an issue. I had to learn how to walk again and use my left arm that got better relatively quickly. I still experienced a numbness and usual left-sided challenges but I don't have any spasticity or anything like that which is visible, which causes my legs, my leg to cramp up, which stops me from walking.

Bill 10:06

I don't have foot drop, my left arm is not closed over or anything like that it all functions but I do have numbness, altered sensation, I experience temperature differently on the left side. And when I get tired, the left side really struggles. But nobody can see it. It's not visible to other people either.

Bill 10:32

And it's a bit of an invisible issue that I have. But I had surgery as well to remove the faulty blood vessel, the AVM to remove that. And I see that you had surgery as well. Your surgery was when you were 12 I imagine after you collapsed, they took you straight into surgery and you woke up five weeks later in a hospital bed with your head stitched up and all sorts of things.

Tommy 11:02

So according to my dad there was quite some delay on the prognosis. They didn't know what it was. They spent 8 to 11 hours to work it out.

Bill 11:48

Yeah, that's right. So how hard was it going back to school? How long did it take you to go back to school?

Tommy 11:56

So it was in April 6th, I spent four months in the hospital. And on the 1st of September, I went back to home. So I spent four months in the hospital just concentrate on rehab and stuff. And then I went back to school and I did one class in the last term of school.

Bill 13:09

So you were almost out of school for the entire school year.

Tommy 13:16

But I just picked up you the next year. Interesting my school is really really good at because when I was in the hospital every Wednesday my home group teacher she brought kids in the hospital to see me and talk to me and just chat as far as just like 20 minutes and 10 minutes, which is really, really good. So like I wasn't as alone, as I probably could've been.

Bill 14:17

You were 12 at a time. How old are you now?

Tommy 14:22

27. I have to think about that.

The Ride To Raise Awareness



Bill 14:31

You've gone through this process and you've lived with the conditions and the situation that you were thrown into a 12 for 15 years now right? So it's been a decent journey. And how long ago did you decide that you're going to start doing something to raise awareness and support the stroke community with the ride that you're planning and we'll talk about the ride in a minute, but when did you decide to do something about this situation?

Tommy 15:13

Probably starts a fair bit back. It's like a story. So some reason I can't remember I started playing table tennis. And like, just in school. I was terrible back then. And I guess my love for sport, and school was one of the main things in my life before.

Tommy 15:59

I started playing table tennis at night and my loss for the cricket was devastating. Playing table tennis gave me a little bit of a drive. And then kept going, it gained a bit more drive, I suppose.

Tommy 16:28

And then everything's away on. The drc camp involves snowboarding. I've never done the love of the door. Try to remember a guy called Dan j. m. is away calm with a weekend-long camp. He was I asked him. Were there any more terms? Any advising? There were can capacity and that and fun from the eye? This is Jim. I don't oversee I transition from a participant into a staff member. Because you got

to say, but I know. I could send that better. And some I was one of the calves i think is is k kids.

Tommy 18:00

And the and Isn't that how many? And I overheard a conversation about decoder and so I interrupted that conversation. And I said, I'm interested in the sound decoder because (inaudible).

Bill 18:33

Yeah. trail or track. What is the kind of trail or

Tommy 18:40

kick out a championship?

Bill 18:42

Yeah. And it's something that a lot of Aussies do, we go to Kota trail, which is in which countries that is

Tommy 18:53

hopping making it

Bill 18:54

it's in Papua New Guinea and we walk the trail that the Australian soldiers would have walked when they were prisoners of war. With in the Second World War, under the rule of Japan, I believe it was the prisoners of war were forced to work and they were working in this jungle situation in the area called Kokoda. And what Aziz do to commemorate that is they go to Papua New Guinea and they do this track. So, did you end up doing the track or is that something that you were thinking of doing?

Tommy 19:44

So, is it kind of a thought process like is the initiate initial stages and like I as an information night in March Two days, four days, which I went to school and yesterday and came back and walk into my house and told my parents aren't doing. And then like, two months later, my dad jumped on board and it became a my dad. While Tim is rich. So doing

Bill 20:42

it, it says here Sorry to interrupt that the Kokoda trail takes between four and 12

days to walk. Yeah.

Tommy 20:52

How long did it take you? So it was a joke, my job is to learn and the thoughts on this screw. I taste so we went ahead. And the plan was then to get a job to us. On the 10th day brevity I paid them off

Bill 21:32

It's actually 96 kilometers of land. It's a decent 60 kilometers in a straight line, but 96 kilometers over hills and turns and bends and kind of stuff. So it's a very that's a very decent distance. 60 miles is a pretty decent distance for anyone to do. And you managed to get through the entire 12 days.

Tommy 22:07

Yeah. I like blood, please. Poison funfest. Like, is Yeah, I got that up to this day. And that is there was some low points notice and my point that

Bill 22:37

The low point, your body aches and pains, blisters, your feet, being in all sorts of terrible conditions. But you got to the end of it. Is that what got you thinking about? I'm going to now do something of my own? Is that how you started to think about your four points of Australia trip, which basically what you mean by the four points is that you're riding your bike to the most extreme. four points of Australia. So right to the end, is that north, south, east or west? Like which direction?

Tommy 23:15

So starting in the West, at the point where which is 43 cases, and then it's that Nani case of tarnation and, and then it's smooth ride. And the very first step point towards things from your motions from like, obviously, will go as far as the bike will allow me to go. Yeah, we'll clarify that is the point I can get through on my walk out to the actual this place or not. Right, that's an added bonus if I feel up to it.

Intro 24:12

If you've had a stroke, and you're in recovery, you'll know what a scary and confusing time it can be, you're likely to have a lot of questions going through your mind. Like how long will it take to recover? Will I actually recover? What things should I avoid in case I make matters worse?

Intro 24:29

Doctors will explain things but obviously you've never had a stroke before. You probably don't know what questions to ask. If this is you, you may be missing out on doing things that could help speed up your recovery.

Intro 24:42

If you're finding yourself in that situation. Stop worrying and head to recovery after stroke comm where you can download a guide that will help you get called the seven questions to ask your doctor about your stroke.

Intro 24:56

These seven questions are the ones Bill wished he'd asked when he was working. From a stroke, they'll not only help you better understand your condition, they'll help you take a more active role in your recovery, head to the website. Now, recovery after stroke, calm and download the guide, it's free.

Four Points Of Australia



Tommy 25:15

Then from there we go up to Cape Byron to Byron Bay, and then on to Cape York, all in all it'll be 9000 plus kilometers.

Bill 25:34

443 hours according to the map that you've got on your website, it's going to take you from the left of Australia, the west of Australia, right to the right side of Australia. And then it's going to take you up to the top of Australia once you go down to the bottom of Australia.

Bill 25:53

So man, that just looks really that doesn't look like anyone should be doing that.

Under any circumstances. I'm looking at that map and just trying to work out how massive it is. That's like going from California, right down to the bottom of the US and then up to New York. That's similar kind of route that you're taking, isn't it?

Tommy 26:20

Yeah yeah I'm not good at US maths I've never been to the US

Bill 26:31

Doesn't sound like you're good at thinking about anything man. Who, in the right mind, who in their right mind comes up with this thing and says that's a good idea. Obviously, you haven't thought about it at all.

Tommy 26:45

I've thought about it for quite some time like um like i was it was actually a mate of mine so i got my recovery tracks in late night late 2018. um through ndis um so like not in the is slow to recover and um i wrote it like after doing kokoda i was like what am i going to do like i didn't really have any drive to do the physical.

Tommy 27:31

And I became a personal trainer up to that point inflow. Dr. Like I said, and I will do my best to make up for my coffee to that same night. And he saw me on my bike outside like, Why Why don't you why around? Right around the Shire? Because I yeah, cool. Do that. And then I, we have obviously refined it to the most extreme point just because some data before.

Bill 28:27

That's mental that is mental. It is. For the people listening or overseas. It's 5523 miles 1890 kilometers. It's so so far to go. And I've done some long drives from Melbourne, where I live near the bottom of Australia, to the north, you know, along the freeway to Sydney and then to Byron Bay, which is at Cape Byron men that takes in a car in a car that takes 20 hours 22 hours. So how many days do you expect that you will be on this journey?

Tommy 29:16

So we set aside a year to do it in. So, but really, I like I've mapped it out on that journey. And the way I've calculated it is by distance. So realistically, in the day, 4 and a half months, to get from state point two lessons from that four days and then another four hours, I want to get out to Catch your bike. We might have changed the word a little bit. It's still like to buy, I suppose. Like, realistically It

will take about 10 minutes. That's my thought on it. But who knows it might take a year I might do it in like, two days.

Bill 30:33

Yeah. Good on you, man. No way. You're not doing it in two days. You're not doing it in two months. You might do it. Hopefully, in a year like you said, I really do. I hope you've got a plan to look after your body, your joints, your body, your fate, your shoes, your hair, everything I hope you've got people that are going to help you out.

Tommy 30:56

So all my bad The good thing is I'm writing Eric coming back. Yeah, so the feedforward kind of thing. So they're a little bit out of the normal bikes I like to think because it tastes a lot more like you've got no momentum going up here and you've got more resistance there no I'm sorry, that can take you a little bit longer.

Tommy 31:43

And I've got a support crew which are my parents man mainly, but the thing is that anyone can come along the journey and they can either ride with me or they can come just be part of the support or help me out. And that's to promote social inclusion. I just being true mates and helping a mate out.

Bill 32:21

And it'll be bloody boring. Doing a bike ride on your own wouldn't it?

Tommy 32:29

I cuz it's the lay down bike it goes slower. So like Well, my take someone like John said 6070 Ks all the 345 day 45k Mark every day, every two hours. So, if I go two hours, that'll be about the case. Okay. But as an all bike there'll be a 60k

Bill 33:11

Okay. So, how many kilometers Do you plan on riding every week or every day?

Tommy 33:17

So, like burns state went to the end of the now. So like Miss June or holy cow we averaged about 74 Ks day, three days or one day rest to advance every three days rest and recover. And like in that time I'll be talking giving hopefully giving talks to anyone or anyone listening.

Tommy 34:01

That might experience Yeah, if you can show them how important it is to raise awareness better. And then after us run the elbow. It decreases like by 10 to 20 days. So I will be back. Okay today. Not too bad. So 550 K's will take like three four to five hours depending how many I cover.

Bill 34:54

Depending on the terrain fair enough. So you are aiming to raise a million dollars For the Stroke Foundation, yeah, surely in there, maybe there's a few bucks there available for you to buy a few beers, new bike tires, something like that.

Tommy 35:13

Yeah, well, we've got a Stroke Foundation, a million dollars raised towards research and stuff. And then we want to get sponsorship to count is about patients. However, local businesses survive poor money, expand by tires, cars, temperatures, and stuff. And then whatever the ages. foundation afterward.

Tommy Quick Raising Funds for the stroke foundation



Bill 36:00

Okay, so looking to raise a million dollars, you're looking for support to get people to support the bike, spare parts, tires, food, accommodation, and you're looking for sponsors, you're looking for people to basically just get on board at any level that they can just to help you cover the costs.

Bill 36:21

And then anything left over from funding, your bike ride, bike, tires, chains, all that kind of stuff, anything left over then gets also supported, folded over and provided to the Stroke Foundation.

Bill 36:36

And that's the Stroke Foundation in Australia, basically, the Stroke Foundation is the main body for stroke research and prevention in Australia. And that are not for profit organization.

Bill 36:53

And they are looking for support as well from donations from the public. And they also looking for support from the government where they raise a little bit of money, and they provide services to stroke survivors in Australia. So it's a really good cause. And it looks like you're going to achieve a lot and do a lot.

Bill 37:18

And then you're going to make a massive difference to people and their lives. And is this going to make a big difference to your life? how's it gonna make you feel a bit about the whole situation about everything that you've been through, after you've completed the ride?

Tommy 37:42

It will make a huge difference to me because, when I started the campaign and as I got further along, like, a lot of people ask me why? why I'm doing it? Obviously, to raise awareness, obviously the social inclusion, mainly towards disability, but could we people's mentality. And all that. But I wanna prove to myself that I can do it, that I'm someone.

Bill 38:28

Sounds like it's a bit of a personal challenge to see what you're capable of.

Tommy 38:33

Yeah, what I was trying to say. And to prove to other people that they can do anything they set their mind to. So it's on that personal level as well as even I can do it why can't you do it?

Bill 39:01

If you can do it, why can't I do it? Let me tell you, man, I don't know. If you can do it. I really, I want to make sure you do I want to make sure you get to the end.

That's why I want to support you in this way. Raise a little bit of awareness, bring people to your page.

Bill 39:16

The4points.org is the website. They can donate there, they can follow your journey there. They can keep up to date with your diary and where we're at. And on Instagram, they can go to @4pointsaustralia they can follow you there.

Bill 39:39

I'll have all the links on the show notes so people can go and find it and come and see you. But let me tell you something. If you do 9000 kilometers. What did we say that was in miles 5523 miles. If you spend a year doing that ride and achieving that goal and raising money for the Stroke Foundation, a million dollars or less or even more.

Bill 40:04

You're not going to make me feel any better about myself, man, you gotta make me feel like an absolute wimp. Like somebody who needs to step up and needs to do more than what I'm doing. That's what you got to make me feel like you're gonna make me feel like I need to get off my ass and be more motivated.

Tommy 40:27

That'll be awesome. I'll be recording all that and really. So that those times in your life where you're challenged and that's where you've got to overcome it that they kind of oh shoot so don't worry you guys will see me in my highs and my lows i'm going to film it.

Bill 40:56

Looking forward to following your journey. And I wish you well. Now we are recording this podcast episode in May of 2021. And according to the countdown timer on your website, it says you've got 90 days, 11 hours and 47 minutes before you start your ride.

Tommy 41:19

I just count days. Not so much the hours is on what is that? Like one o'clock in the morning? To get a point? Oh, my praise? Na by the very least for the studying time. Yeah.

Bill 41:48

All right, 90 days then. So in around three months time, you're going to be on the road. How much training are you doing?

Tommy 41:57

I'm going to Pete is like when we go just to drive from Melbourne. to state Why not? And is like for both as case and I don't want to lose physical fitness. So we could do it in five days. We have chosen to do is have practice rounds. Where I will go I my parents are driving. And oh right, like 60 days a day until we get over to the

Bill 43:01

So part of getting to stede point which is 4000 kilometers away from Melbourne is you're going to include some of that time in the training. Yeah, that's a great idea.

Tommy 43:15

Right now i'm training for mainly validation which for the past two weeks have been difficult i could say um because like so i'm just trying to think of the best way to explain it so like one hour if you break it down one hour of heels in the now i'll get maybe say 190 meters of elevation done.

Tommy 43:57

Like that that's just going in a loop so going downhill and now up downhill and up and down the whole hour and so like this week well the week just gone I did 500 and 508 meters of elevation 33 k's of one hill going up and down that's really boring um and um that took three hours and like after that i was absolutely smoked like next day i was so sore and stuff um because like it's so much stress on the body.

Tommy 44:59

If it's not if it's a normal ride like i'm riding from here to about it might be 500 meters of elevation but it's not consistently going down and up yeah it's a bit a bit easier um and so for the past two well the past three weeks i've been finally here 1700 minutes of elevation all right in one week but i haven't been able to hit that target which has been very annoying.

Tommy 45:46

But like I said that 500 salvation last week on a Wednesday that was like i solid session done so like i try and take the positives out of that yeah so this week what this week will look like is two five hundred men efforts and like one thousand four

hundred minutes of salvation in total so i'm just like kind of similar less but at the same time it's a bit more effort required.

Bill 46:36

Yeah. Wow.

Tommy 46:37

Does that make sense?

Bill 46:38

It does, man. It does. And I'm glad to see you doing it and not me.

Ride together with Tommy Quick

Tommy 46:45

Are you sure you don't want to jump on to a bit of a journey?

Bill 46:48

I do. I actually do. I would love to catch you on your Melbourne to Wilson's prom journey. Maybe I can. If I follow you, and I know where you're going to be. And when you're going to be there, I might be able to jump on and do a little bit of that.

Tommy 47:06

First question. Do you have a bike?

Bill 47:09

I do. I have a bike. I have an E bike because it's too hard for me to ride a regular bike. I have an E bike that's going to help me get up those hills and all that kind of stuff. So that'll be good. Yeah, if you're in Melbourne at a certain time, and I know you're coming I can plan for it. And I can jump on and do maybe a couple of days worth of riding with you.

Tommy 47:35

That would actually be fantastic. I think that early November, late October from off the top my head.

Bill 47:50

Perfect weather for it as well.

Tommy 47:51

Yeah, not too cold just right.

Bill 47:58

Man, I really appreciate you coming on the podcast. Congratulations on your massive tour of Australia. I hope you achieve your goals and raise money and all the things that you want to achieve. I hope you learn a lot from it and I know it's going to help a lot of people. So Tommy, I really appreciate it man, what you're doing for the community. And I just wish you well and I thank you for being on the podcast.

Tommy 48:26

Thank you for having me.

Intro 48:32

Discover how to heal your brain after stroke go to recoveryafterstroke.com importantly, we present many podcasts designed to give you an insight and understanding into the experiences of other individuals.

Intro 48:48

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Intro 49:11

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Intro 49:27

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Intro 49:43

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Intro 50:00

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