

"LOOK BOTH WAYS...!" GOOD

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Nearly everyone has heard that piece of advice because most parents teach it to their children, and I was no exception. One Sunday afternoon, though, I forgot that lesson.

It was the start of a workweek for night check, and in keeping with the usual Sunday practice, we had PT before going to work. I actually was excited about this particular PT session because I knew I would get to play basketball, which I hadn't been able to do for a while. I just had come off light duty from an injury.

I woke up early that morning to prepare for the day ahead. I got everything I would need ready, slipped into my shoes, grabbed my bag, and headed for my car to make the 20-minute drive to the base gym at NAS Oceana. I was a little upset when I left the house because the weather was looking nasty.

When I arrived at Oceana, I parked my car in the lot and reached for my bag. It was then I noticed I had on running shoes that soak up water easily for some reason. I then reached into the back seat for my basketball shoes and put them in my bag.

By now, it was raining. I knew if I didn't want to get too wet, I would have to hustle. I hopped out of the car with my bag on my shoulder and dashed toward the gym. I didn't stop to consider that, on the way, I would have to cross two driving lanes, one of which was in between two rows of parked cars. I lowered my head to shield my eyes from the rain and made it across the first lane safely. Racing between the parked cars, I caught only a glimpse from the corner of my eye of a vehicle heading toward me as I came out the other side.

The driver hit me, and I sailed over the front of the hood before landing on the ground. The lady motorist opened her car door and asked if I was OK; I said no but added that I was going to try and get up. I pushed myself up but fell back to the ground.

A couple guys who had seen what happened from the doors of the gym ran outside and helped me inside. A gym employee called an ambulance, and after a little trouble with the stretcher, I was whisked away to Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, where doctors took X-rays and gave me some medication for the pain. I wasn't injured seriously—just had some deep bruising and hurt pride, knowing that the entire night shift had seen what happened.

Now, I can look back and laugh at the incident, but I didn't see anything funny about it at the time it happened. I'm not the only person who crosses a street without looking, but I am one who got caught in the act and paid a price. I spent three days sick in quarters, followed by 10 days of light duty. Not using my head cost my command, me, and the poor woman who hit me that day. I assure you I won't be crossing any more streets without remembering what my parents told me a long time ago. ■



ADVICE, BUT I FORGOT

