

ADAM STEPHENS

CONQUERS THE HILLS WITH INNOVATIVE TRIKE

BY SARAH DOYLE LACAMOIRE

ADAM STEPHENS' OUTLOOK on a favorite pastime changed one day along the slopes of California's Mt. Diablo.

That's when the Cal Poly industrial technology professor accidentally plunged his mountain bike off a 12-foot vertical drop, shearing off his bike's front fork and pulverizing the rear – leaving him splayed on the ground, writhing in pain.

Stephens was afraid he would never ride a mountain bike again, at least not in comfort, due to a slipped spinal disk.

Two years ago, Stephens began developing a bike designed specifically for back pain sufferers: "The Berserker," a recumbent, off-road tricycle that minimizes prostate and back pain, as well as palm and foot numbness.

"The bike makes you feel like you're almost floating above the terrain," Stephens says. Suspension systems on each wheel absorb shock and prevent body pain, while larger-than-average wheels allow the bike to roll over big objects. It is also very light, with a frame made of aircraft-grade aluminum.

Marketing guidance has been provided by Industrial Technology Professor Jay Singh and students taking his course in advanced packaging dynamics for distribution, who tested the Berserker's shock and vibration performance.

"The trike has given many Cal Poly students the opportunity to learn by doing," says Stephens. "This is a real world project. It's much different than what happens in a traditional classroom." □

