

Real Life Renos - Episode 2

Sean Kelley

00;00;03;14 - 00;00;15;12

Karen Brown

Today, we in Kitchener at the home of Sean Kelley. Three years ago, Sean was in a catastrophic motorcycle accident. As he finds his way back to independence there are few things he has to do a little bit differently.

00;00;15;19 - 00;00;27;27

Karen Brown

One of them is cooking and preparing his own food. To that end, Pro Accessibility's Pat Acquisto was brought in to work with the occupational therapist and redesign his kitchen. Today we're going to see that kitchen. Hi Pat.

00;00;27;27 - 00;00;28;11

Pat Acquisto

How you doing?

00;00;28;11 - 00;00;28;15

Karen Brown

Good.

00;00;28;15 - 00;00;29;05

Pat Acquisto

C'mon in.

00;00;36;25 - 00;00;42;22

Karen Brown

Here we are. <knock knock knock knock knock>

00;00;42;22 - 00;00;42;23

Sean Kelley

Come in.

00;00;42;23 - 00;00;43;10

Karen Brown

Hi, Sean.

00;00;43;10 - 00;00;43;20

Sean Kelley

Hey, hey. Come in.

00;00;43;20 - 00;00;43;27

Pat Acquisto

Take that for you?

00;00;43;27 - 00;00;44;28

Karen Brown

Sure.

00;00;44;28 - 00;00;48;02

Pat Acquisto

Hi Sean. I'll just put it away.

00;00;48;02 - 00;00;48;12

Karen Brown

Hi,

00;00;48;12 - 00;00;50;08

Sean Kelley

Hey! Have a seat.

00;00;50;08 - 00;00;52;03

Karen Brown

Thank you. How are you today?

00;00;52;03 - 00;00;53;05

Sean Kelley

Not bad. How are you?

00;00;53;05 - 00;00;55;13

Karen Brown

Good. Thank you. Wow, there have been some changes here.

00;00;55;19 - 00;00;56;26

Sean Kelley

Yeah.

00;00;56;26 - 00;01;03;08

Karen Brown

Something I don't know a lot about is your life before the crash happened. Can you tell me what what was going on in your life?

00;01;03;08 - 00;01;04;02

Sean Kelley

Yeah, sure.

00;01;04;02 - 00;01;04;19

Karen Brown

Four years and before?

00;01;04;19 - 00;01;07;10

Sean Kelley

Yeah. The lifestyle was very up. Go, go, go.

00;01;07;11 - 00;01;21;22

Sean Kelley

I lived life on the edge. I loved going high speeds, motorcycle racing and whatnot. I got my pilot's license. I wanted to go up. All your loops. I wanted to tumble. Well, I was at Toronto Airport and I got my scuba license. I went to law.

00;01;21;28 - 00;01;22;02

Karen Brown

Law?

00;01;22;02 - 00;01;22;26

Sean Kelley

Yeah, law.

00;01;22;26 - 00;01;27;02

Karen Brown

You are like peeling back the layers of an onion. You went to law school.

00;01;27;02 - 00;01;33;20

Sean Kelley

No, I didn't go to law school. I went to paralegal school and then the worst happened.

00;01;33;20 - 00;01;34;13

Karen Brown

The worst happened.

00;01;34;16 - 00;01;35;18

Sean Kelley

The worst happened.

00;01;35;18 - 00;01;36;23

Karen Brown

Tell me about that.

00;01;36;23 - 00;01;43;10

Sean Kelley

Well, whatever I remember, it was on a motorcycle. I was doing about 140. Yup.

00;01;43;10 - 00;01;47;23

Karen Brown

That's fast, even in a car for me here. Maybe I'm a chicken. But you used to race them.

00;01;47;23 - 00;01;50;20

Sean Kelley

Yeah, wasn't. And I was gaining speed, too,

00;01;50;20 - 00;01;50;29

Karen Brown

OK.

00;01;50;29 - 00;02;00;18

Sean Kelley

But it was also becoming night fall. So I went right into the back of a stopped truck. Yup. And did myself in.

00;02;00;18 - 00;02;05;02

Karen Brown

My name is Karen Brown. Working in fall in injury prevention for nearly three decades,

00;02;05;02 - 00;02;21;28

Karen Brown

I've learned so much about how people want to live. It led me to numerous certifications in home modification and now to the creation of Reno Studios. Today, we're going to show you how to elevate safety, confidence and independence through renovating not only the spaces we live in, but how we think about our lives.

00;02;23;02 - 00;02;39;22

Karen Brown

I'll introduce you to the experts and show you the products builds and most importantly, the results. A home that works with you, not against you. This is Real Life Renos.

00;02;39;22 - 00;02;44;16

Sean Kelley

So I went right into the back of a stopped truck. Yup. And did myself in.

00;02;45;06 - 00;02;46;07

Karen Brown

But you don't remember it?

00;02;46;07 - 00;02;49;26

Sean Kelley

I don't. All I remember is seeing Avalanche on the back of the truck.

00;02;49;26 - 00;02;50;19

Karen Brown

Which is the kind of truck.

00;02;50;19 - 00;02;57;04

Sean Kelley

Which is kind of truck it was. I mean, it just came to me pieces. I know I was in coma for a few months.

00;02;57;24 - 00;03;06;11

Sean Kelley

Compound fractured leg, compound fractured arm, internal bleeding, bladder and spleen, rips of more than two inches on each one. Oh yeah.

00;03;06;11 - 00;03;07;11

Karen Brown

You weren't supposed to make it.

00;03;07;11 - 00;03;12;14

Sean Kelley

No, no. I wasn't supposed to make it. Some people need a swift kick to the butt to fly right. Not me.

00;03;12;27 - 00;03;25;21

Sean Kelley

I needed to be taken to the end of life and saying you decide. I'm still fighting. Only thing I was supposed to be able to do is stare the window. Massive head injury. Can't do this. Can't do that. Hell with that.

00;03;26;08 - 00;03;28;26

Sean Kelley

No, I'm going to do it. I going to to teach myself.

00;03;28;26 - 00;03;34;03

Karen Brown

But one of your tasks is learning how to prepare your own food and cook for yourself. Are you enjoying that?

00;03;34;03 - 00;03;42;13

Sean Kelley

Yes I am. I like putting together a list of things I need. Becomes a mental exercise for me, too. Buying healthy stuff and eat because I don't want

00;03;42;13 - 00;03;44;03

Sean Kelley

to get a wheelchair gut.

00;03;44;03 - 00;03;47;21

Karen Brown

And in order to make that happen, this whole kitchen has been built just for you.

00;03;47;21 - 00;03;48;08

Sean Kelley

Yes.

00;03;48;08 - 00;03;49;10

Karen Brown

Well, it's beautiful.

00;03;49;10 - 00;03;55;13

Sean Kelley

Yes it's very accessible because there's a difference between being in a wheelchair and pertaining to my injury.

00;03;55;25 - 00;03;56;03

Karen Brown

Yes

00;03;56;03 - 00;04;02;12

Sean Kelley

Since my injury is a C-7 injury that means the muscles they have for midsection are very ... they're lacking very much.

00;04;02;12 - 00;04;02;26

Karen Brown

OK.

00;04;02;26 - 00;04;11;03

Sean Kelley

So that's what makes it difficult for me when it comes to cooking. So it has to be done for a specific height and would be easier for me.

00;04;12;13 - 00;04;26;24

Karen Brown

For those who have a C-7 injury, their nerves can control elbow extension and some finger extension. Most can straighten their arm and have normal movement of their shoulders. They can accomplish most activities of daily living by themselves, but may need assistance with more difficult tasks.

00;04;27;05 - 00;04;31;14

Karen Brown

They may also be able to drive an adapted vehicle.

00;04;31;14 - 00;04;42;23

Karen Brown

That's an interesting point, because I think a lot of people would think an accessible kitchen is an accessible kitchen, is an accessible kitchen. It's not. This is very much designed specifically for your needs.

00;04;42;23 - 00;04;44;11

Sean Kelley

For my injury, for my needs.

00;04;44;22 - 00;04;48;09

Karen Brown

Well, I'm going to go and find out what Pat's doing and get him to give us a tour.

00;04;48;09 - 00;04;49;07

Sean Kelley

Sounds awesome.

00;04;49;07 - 00;04;49;26

Karen Brown

Thanks, Sean.

00;04;49;26 - 00;05;00;15

Sean Kelley

No problem.

00;05;00;15 - 00;05;02;06

Karen Brown

Tell me about the project, Pat.

00;05;02;06 - 00;05;07;07

Pat Acquisto

Well, this design, we base it all on Sean's disabilities. Myself along with the OT,

00;05;07;12 - 00;05;13;07

Pat Acquisto

we came up with what we think is the optimum fully accessible kitchen for Sean.

00;05;13;07 - 00;05;24;13

Karen Brown

Occupational therapy as a health profession that empowers people of all ages to overcome barriers in their everyday lives so they can do more and live better through solutions created for each individual's unique needs.

00;05;24;21 - 00;05;36;24

Karen Brown

Occupational therapists help people of all ages and abilities recover from an injury or illness, to participate in day to day activities and experience life to the fullest.

00;05;36;24 - 00;05;46;21

Pat Acquisto

Although the kitchen overall size is not huge, there's a lot of hidden features that for the naked eye you may not realize but again, to Sean, it makes a huge impact day to day.

00;05;46;21 - 00;05;48;13

Karen Brown

OK, let's start with the refrigerator.

00;05;48;13 - 00;06;01;02

Pat Acquisto

So here we have the side-by-side fridge freezer. We have the filtered water and ice. The shelves are fully adjustable. He can

completely open the door sitting roll up right up against the fridge and access that.

00;06;01;02 - 00;06;14;05

Karen Brown

Now we've talked about optimal reach zone on this show before, and that applies to this refrigerator and freezer as well because from Sean's seated position, he can have his most used items in the fridge and in the freezer within that optimal reach zone.

00;06;14;12 - 00;06;17;11

Karen Brown

Makes it so much easier for him. Now we come along to the cupboards.

00;06;17;11 - 00;06;27;15

Pat Acquisto

Yep, so one of the requests from Sean is he wanted to make sure he had access to all of his upper cabinets. So this one here in particular, because it was so close to the cooktop, we actually lowered it

00;06;27;23 - 00;06;32;17

Pat Acquisto

so Sean can have access to the spices and all his preparation foods for his meals.

00;06;32;17 - 00;06;35;16

Karen Brown

Terrific. Now this cooktop, I love these cooktops.

00;06;35;16 - 00;06;42;10

Pat Acquisto

This cooktop is an induction cooktop and the way it functions and safety features is you need a magnetic pot or pan

00;06;42;23 - 00;06;54;17

Pat Acquisto

then when it makes contact with the cooktop, it will start to cook. And the good thing about that, once you remove that pot, it always

this cool to touch so someone with a brain injury, you don't have that worry of them ever burning themselves.

00;06;54;25 - 00;07;05;18

Karen Brown

And what I like about these as well is the controls are all at the front. So there's no reaching over hot pots, anything that's boiling. Love that. How high are these countertops, do you remember?

00;07;05;18 - 00;07;12;04

Pat Acquisto

Your typical height, you always want to range between 35 and 36 inches, depending on the person that you're dealing with, their disability,

00;07;12;13 - 00;07;15;07

Pat Acquisto

so this is probably in around 33 inches, I would say.

00;07;15;07 - 00;07;17;14

Karen Brown

Mm hmm. And what was here before?

00;07;17;14 - 00;07;24;24

Pat Acquisto

So there was full cabinets below, and if you can see how we designed we gave Sean access complete access right below.

00;07;24;24 - 00;07;29;25

Pat Acquisto

Everything is open, so you have access to this cooktop and then swivel over to his sink.

00;07;29;25 - 00;07;35;12

Karen Brown

And save some energy. Now I have been dying to see this. Can you show me this?

00;07;35;12 - 00;07;37;01

Pat Acquisto

Yes, so this is one of the hidden features.

00;07;37;01 - 00;07;52;13

Pat Acquisto

This is one of the upper cabinets. We have a fully manual pull down shelf. You can see the way it functions. It'll pull right down to a comfortable level for Sean to access anything he's looking for and then pull down and it'll gradually set itself back up.

00;07;52;23 - 00;07;58;05

Karen Brown

Fantastic. This is the best idea, and it's not a permanent fixture, is it?

00;07;58;05 - 00;08;05;16

Pat Acquisto

Not at all. So this can be transported and brought to a new location. We actually just installed them into the pretty much standard sized cabinets.

00;08;05;16 - 00;08;09;02

Karen Brown

Right, so if Sean were ever to move, he could take it with them,

00;08;09;02 - 00;08;09;27

Pat Acquisto

Exactly, comes along with him.

00;08;09;27 - 00;08;13;05

Karen Brown

I love this. I absolutely love those.

00;08;13;05 - 00;08;18;19

Karen Brown

Pull down shelves make a lot of sense, whether you're in a wheelchair or maybe a little height challenged like I am.

00;08;19;03 - 00;08;27;04

Karen Brown

This particular unit is removable, so when the owner wishes to leave and move to a new residence, this can come with him.

00;08;27;04 - 00;08;29;23

Karen Brown

Now this is also a very special feature,

00;08;29;23 - 00;08;34;13

Pat Acquisto

So your regular wall oven will typically have a pull down door.

00;08;34;21 - 00;08;48;23

Pat Acquisto

This one actually has a side door where it opens up so Sean again can roll up, have access to whatever meal he's prepping for that day. He has access to a drawer here and now he can transfer his his dish.

00;08;49;01 - 00;09;02;26

Karen Brown

This style of oven door makes so much sense for everybody. It doesn't matter who they are, what age you are. The idea of reaching over this hot door, it doesn't make sense for anybody. So there are chef's ovens that open in the middle and come out this way.

00;09;03;01 - 00;09;14;24

Karen Brown

But you can also have an opening from the left or the right. So this is what the OT and you chose to install here. Now this is another piece that is so smart. Tell me about it.

00;09;14;24 - 00;09;19;08

Pat Acquisto

Yeah. So this was one of the priorities for Sean. He goes, Pat, you know what?

00;09;19;08 - 00;09;34;00

Pat Acquisto

I love to entertain. Somewhere he can actually sit down with his friends and enjoy a meal. Depending on their situation, if they're sitting on a chair or was in a wheelchair so now he's got the ability of self-adjusting, fully electric countertop.

00;09;34;10 - 00;09;40;07

Pat Acquisto

He uses this when he does his meal preps as well so it's a multi functioning task table.

00;09;40;07 - 00;09;45;23

Karen Brown

So smart, so smart. If he puts it all the way down, he has the leverage he needs to cut vegetables.

00;09;45;23 - 00;09;46;07

Pat Acquisto

For sure.

00;09;46;07 - 00;09;59;00

Karen Brown

He can bring it up. He could actually bring it underneath the oven and serve right from the oven with those hot dishes. Oh, we should mention this as well. Now this is here so that Sean can do what?

00;09;59;00 - 00;10;04;14

Pat Acquisto

Yes. So this is one of Sean's techniques that he actually improvised. What with in a wheelchair,

00;10;04;14 - 00;10;20;16

Pat Acquisto

he had an issue with accessing his hood fan and certain electrical bylaws doesn't allow us to drop it as low as he would like, so he came up with the solution where he can now access all of his buttons from here, turn on his fan. All right.

00;10;20;16 - 00;10;25;01

Karen Brown

Perfect. As well as reaching things in the upper levels. Not of that cabinet, because that's the pull down.

00;10;25;01 - 00;10;25;14

Pat Acquisto

Exactly.

00;10;25;14 - 00;10;26;17

Karen Brown

But the other ones as well.

00;10;26;17 - 00;10;27;26

Pat Acquisto

Yes, exactly.

00;10;27;26 - 00;10;32;15

Karen Brown

These kind of multipurpose pieces in a small space are the bomb.

00;10;32;15 - 00;10;32;27

Pat Acquisto

For sure.

00;10;34;14 - 00;10;49;10

Karen Brown

So now we know how Sean cooks the groceries. He's figured out a special way to get the groceries, and he's going to tell us about that.

00;10;49;10 - 00;10;52;27

Karen Brown

So you have devised a wonderful solution ...

00;10;52;27 - 00;10;53;10

Sean Kelley

Yes I have

00;10;53;10 - 00;10;55;04

Karen Brown

... for getting around. Tell us about it.

00;10;55;14 - 00;11;04;05

Sean Kelley

OK. I did some massive research trying to find out what I can do without buying a scooter. So this right here, I call it my Handillac.

00;11;04;05 - 00;11;04;11

Karen Brown

Handillac?

00;11;04;11 - 00;11;09;29

Sean Kelley

Yup, cause prior to my accident I had Cadillacs before. So now I'm handicapped.

00;11;10;04 - 00;11;19;11

Sean Kelley

I call it my Handillac. OK, OK, but this right here I helped design. The front was already built, but this wasn't. The attachment.

00;11;19;11 - 00;11;20;00

Pat Acquisto

These parts right here.

00;11;20;00 - 00;11;28;20

Karen Brown

Yeah, it is a T-bar. You had to attach to your wheelchair, but I'm like, yeah, I don't want a huge metal T-bar. Took us about two months to come up with the idea.

00;11;29;00 - 00;11;32;13

Sean Kelley

so you can clamp down and adjust it to every wheelchair.

00;11;32;13 - 00;11;35;00

Karen Brown

Now, tell me why you needed this to begin with.

00;11;35;00 - 00;11;44;18

Sean Kelley

OK, because I remember the place I was at. There was Tim Hortons, right right there. These are the same, but every time I wanted Tim Hortons, I'd have to call a cab.

00;11;45;06 - 00;11;55;21

Sean Kelley

By the time the cab comes it's hours later, plus the amount of money that it costs me to get the cab over here, it was like 60 bucks a place to get to do yet to get to a place I could see.

00;11;55;25 - 00;12;06;17

Sean Kelley

So I was paying pretty much a round trip ticket to Cuba. You know, just for a coffee, you know? So I said, there's got to be a better way. I just want to hook up to something and go anytime I want to.

00;12;06;17 - 00;12;07;14

Karen Brown

Show us how it works.

00;12;07;15 - 00;12;18;12

Sean Kelley

You got it. So what I'll do is I'll get myself in the middle ...

00;12;18;12 - 00;12;19;12

Karen Brown

And you're attached.

00;12;19;12 - 00;12;27;21

Sean Kelley

And I'm attached. And what I do is this is my safety valve, my safety switch, so I moved that up. Now look, my casters are off the ground.

00;12;28;01 - 00;12;49;07

Sean Kelley

I'll push forward. OK, then I'll take this up ... now. OK, that gets tucked away. Reverse, reverse and press forward. That's it. The maximum speed on it was 20 K, but that's far too fast for someone in a wheelchair.

00;12;49;15 - 00;12;54;04

Sean Kelley

So I'm happy with five K, right? A full battery will last me 50 miles.

00;12;54;04 - 00;12;54;24

Karen Brown

50 miles!

00;12;54;24 - 00;12;56;15

Sean Kelley

50 miles. Yup.

00;12;56;15 - 00;12;58;23

Karen Brown

Now tell me how it does in the snow because Canadian winters.

00;12;58;23 - 00;13;02;14

Sean Kelley

OK. Yes, it goes well over the snow, too.

00;13;02;14 - 00;13;02;26

Karen Brown

Really?

00;13;02;26 - 00;13;06;21

Sean Kelley

Yeah. These casters on the ground get caught in the snow and can't do nothing.

00;13;07;03 - 00;13;23;27

Sean Kelley

If you just use the main wheel and these wheels here, depending on the snow you have to go through, should be OK. So loosen that up. That's normal for like normal, the road out today. But when it snows I'll bring it closer, OK, to add more weight to it.

00;13;24;06 - 00;13;24;18

Karen Brown

Right.

00;13;24;18 - 00;13;29;07

Sean Kelley

So yes, you have your arms out here, like again you're driving a Harley.

00;13;29;07 - 00;13;29;17

Karen Brown

Or a Kawasaki!

00;13;29;17 - 00;13;38;04

Sean Kelley

Yeah, you'd have to be closer like that. I can go out, get my coffee. I just go any time I want to.

00;13;38;22 - 00;13;40;21

Karen Brown

Now, how can other people get one of these

00;13;40;21 - 00;13;42;01

Sean Kelley

Well, they can get a hold of me.

00;13;42;01 - 00;13;44;09

Karen Brown

You've got a side gig going on.

00;13;44;09 - 00;13;48;17

Sean Kelley

I've got a side gig. A big side gig. I've had this for about six months now ...

00;13;48;17 - 00;13;48;29

Karen Brown

OK.

00;13;48;29 - 00;13;54;13

Sean Kelley

... and I've been using it, using it every day, and it's mint. It is fantastic.

00;13;54;19 - 00;13;59;29

Pat Acquisto

Sean, to me it looks like you figured out a way to gain a bit more of your independence and save money at the same time.

00;13;59;29 - 00;14;03;17

Sean Kelley

And not a little bit of my independence. A lot back, a lot back.

00;14;03;17 - 00;14;04;24

Karen Brown

Well, thank you very much for showing that to us.

00;14;04;29 - 00;14;06;02

Sean Kelley

No problem.

00;14;06;02 - 00;14;07;29

Karen Brown

We'll make sure that people know how to get in touch with you.

00;14;07;29 - 00;14;09;05

Sean Kelley

Join me in the engine.

00;14;09;05 - 00;14;09;15

Karen Brown

Yes.

00;14;14;17 - 00;14;18;03

Karen Brown

Thank you so much for letting us look around your place. It is set up so perfectly for you.

00;14;18;07 - 00;14;19;02

Sean Kelley

Yeah, it is.

00;14;19;02 - 00;14;21;16

Karen Brown
Tell me what it means to your independence.

00;14;21;16 - 00;14;34;25

Sean Kelley

Whew. It means a lot to me. I cook for myself. I shop for myself. Go whenever I want to go and I don't have to rely on someone else's schedule. I can actually go and get it myself and the freedom with my Handillac there.

00;14;34;26 - 00;14;39;11

Sean Kelley

I mean, I just love it. I love it because everything is more accessible for me now.

00;14;39;11 - 00;14;40;29

Karen Brown

You're building quite a life for yourself.

00;14;40;29 - 00;14;49;09

Sean Kelley

I am now. Now I can actually do things like a normal human being. I just have to do things a different way. That's all.

00;14;49;09 - 00;14;51;05

Karen Brown

Well, thank you so much for sharing all of this with us.

00;14;51;05 - 00;14;51;19

Sean Kelley

Thank you for listening to me.

00;14;51;19 - 00;14;54;28

Karen Brown

It has been inspirational. Right, take care of yourself.

00;14;54;28 - 00;14;56;13

Sean Kelley

Thank you so much.

00;14;56;13 - 00;15;01;00

Karen Brown

And thank you for joining us. Please join us again for another episode of Real Life Renos.