New York Times features Hanger practitioner and patient, competitive cyclist Damian Lopez Alfonso

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New York, New York, June 22, 2011 – Hanger practitioner John Rheinstein, CP and his work with competitive cyclist Damian Lopez Alfonso were recently featured in the *New York Times*.

Following is an excerpt from the June 9, 2011 *New York Times* article by David Goodman titled, "The Long Hard Ride of Damian Lopez Alfonso":

> *With only the tips of his elbows touching his bicycle's upturned handlebars, Damian Lopez Alfonso pedaled along the Hudson River bike path on a cool March day. His balancing act elicited stares from disbelieving pedestrians and curious double-takes from fellow cyclists.*
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> *Because not only does Mr. Alfonso ride his bike without forearms, lost in a devastating childhood accident, but he also rides it very, very fast…*
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> *Despite his disadvantages, Mr. Alfonso, 34, has won local competitions at home in Cuba and he races nearly every weekend against able-bodied cyclists in informal events. But the alterations to his bike that allow him to do so — turning the handlebars nearly 180 degrees upward, so the brakes and gear shifters face him — have also kept him out of officially sanctioned international competitions, which have strict equipment rules.*
>
> *But not for much longer.*
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> *In July, Mr. Alfonso is scheduled to race in Canada, the first event on his road to qualifying for the 2012 Paralympic Games in London. If all goes well, it will be the culmination of a nearly decade-long journey for Mr. Alfonso, a story of sudden tragedy, grim determination and a little help from a lot of perfect strangers in a bicycling community thousands of miles away…*
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> *A separate team of specialists worked on the prosthetics that will allow Mr. Alfonso to ride with his handlebars in the normal position, which has proved to be challenging. Few if any cyclists have raced competitively without forearms, said John Rheinstein, a prosthetics designer at Hanger, so developing the right device has been a process of trial and error.*
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> *Because the rules prohibit attaching prosthetics to the bike itself, the arms must fit tightly enough to give Mr. Alfonso control over the bike while allowing enough free movement for him to shift gears and to brake.*
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> *"Nobody's ever done this before," said Mr. Rheinstein, who estimated the cost of the custom prosthetics, which are being donated, at $10,000.*

To read the full article, click here.

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