

# 11:30

## Wednesday 26th October

Was when Orla earned a distinction grade in her tap dance exam, a mark the same as her able bodied classmates. Mum, Lucy, couldn't have been prouder of the 9-year-old who was diagnosed with Hemiplegia Cerebral Palsy when she was just two years old. Thanks to her day and night AFO's from Steeper, she's able to thrive doing what she enjoys most - dancing!



# Case Study

## Orla Watts



“She put her tap shoes on and slipped instantly like she was walking on ice and she couldn’t jump because her right leg was so tight, but now she’s a pro!”

Lucy, Orla’s Mum

### The story

Orla loves being active. She started dancing when she was only three and currently participates in a selection of classes including ballet and tap. She also loves to swim, but she initially struggled with these activities because of her Cerebral Palsy that affects mostly the right side of her body, particularly her leg. Her treatment plan began eight years ago with prescription Pedro boots. However, after a year in boots Orla’s consultant and physiotherapist agreed the boots were not providing enough support and Orla was prescribed a day and night AFO, in conjunction with daily physio. As Orla grew, her overall care package also included serial casting and Botox injections.

Orla’s mum, Lucy, says, “She has always been really good with the process of being cast for her AFO’s and approached each appointment as a little adventure, even when she was growing a lot and she’d have to go every few months to get a new AFO cast.” Orla enjoyed choosing a new pattern for each new AFO as well as shopping for footwear that would fit over them, she would giggle while trying on different sized shoes on each foot.

Orla also loves fashion and playing with her Barbie’s so when she asked if there would ever be a Barbie doll like her, her mum knew she had to make it happen.

### The solution

Lucy reached out to the Steeper customer service team and told us how she wanted to surprise Orla with a new Barbie doll – but not just any Barbie doll, one that looks just like her!

To complete the look, she needed a tiny AFO, and our team were thrilled to get involved! Barbie came into our clinic, had her leg cast just as Orla does when she attends clinic, and

the plastics technicians got to work crafting the adorable miniature AFO.

Lucy surprised Orla with the new Barbie and a scrap book of her being cast for her AFO on a family trip to the Peak District and says, “When we contacted the Steeper team, we were so happy that this was something that could be accommodated. Orla is over the moon with her own results and her new Barbie is a reminder of the journey she has been on, it helps her recognise the importance of the steps she goes through herself each time she needs a new AFO. She has been busy planning outfits for her new Barbie so that they can match!”

### The turning point

When Orla first started tap dancing at the Bev-Lyn School of Dance, her mum says, “She put her tap shoes on and slipped instantly like she was walking on ice and she couldn’t jump because her right leg was so tight, but now she’s a pro!” While Orla doesn’t wear her AFO’s during dance practice, they have complimented her love of dance by helping her to build strength and balance.

The team at the Bev-Lyn School of Dance have been so supportive throughout Orla’s dancing journey. Her mum says, “She did her first dance show this year and absolutely loved it! It was amazing to see her up on the stage having such a great time, when only a few years ago she could hardly stand up in her tap shoes. She’s been doing dance exams every year and consistently achieves brilliant grades.”

Orla is also now learning to ride a bike, something Lucy says would have been impossible without the support of her AFO’s because of the position of her foot and leg.

**To find out more about Orla’s story visit [www.steepergroup.com](http://www.steepergroup.com)**



Orla trying on new shoes with her AFO