

GUIDING CLIENTS THROUGH DARK TIMES

Being a workers' compensation lawyer, I often see people at their absolute lowest point. Following a serious, traumatic injury, the folks that walk through our office doors are scrambling to find their financial footing in the wake of a crisis, struggling beneath the invisible weight of immense chronic pain. They can be crushingly isolated by their condition — sometimes even from those who love them most. So, besides the guidance I provide them through the complex legal process that goes along with the Ohio workers' compensation institution, it's vital that we at Monast Law reassure our clients on a deeper, more personal level too. These are people, they are suffering, and it's only right that we do everything we can to ease their burden.

A lot of businesses give lip service to the idea that the people they serve are more than just clients, but in my firm, I like to think that we genuinely do our best to embody these human values. Typically, the face of compassion at the office is my director of operations, Wilma Sams.



Wilma is the person who will have a massive pile of work on her desk, and a client will call and ask for her specifically — not with a case update, but just because they're having a rough day and need a little support. Invariably, Wilma will drop everything to be there for them, no matter the situation. She's just one of the most empathetic, giving people I know with a real heart for talking to people, and it shows in the work she does for our clients. It's why I joke she can never, ever retire, under any circumstances — ever.

When a client calls holding back tears, staring down a long, dark tunnel without a glimmer of light in sight, it's our job to let them know that hope lies on the other end. What our clients are going through is far from unusual. The debilitating emotional and physical turmoil that comes from work-related injuries is something that nearly every injured worker must face. It can be a great salve to our clients to know that they're not alone in this; this is a process that we've guided hundreds of folks just like them through with great results.

We've designed our entire operation on being as approachable, available, and compassionate as possible for the people depending on us. I'm so grateful that our clients are so comfortable with us; some old clients with cases long closed will call to razz us when they see something funny in the newsletter or phone just to chat sometimes. It means a lot that our firm can be that pillar of support for those going through a tough time. I've seen time and time again that when you're embroiled in an event as soul-crushing as a serious injury, a little helping hand can make all the difference.

-Jim Monast



"When a client calls holding back tears, staring down a long, dark tunnel without a glimmer of light in sight, it's our job to let them know that hope lies on the other end."

Get the Most Out of Your Digital Home Assistant

More and more people are welcoming the Amazon Echo or the Google Home into their spaces. Everyone knows they make great Bluetooth speakers and can tell you the weather forecast, but they're also capable of so much more.

Digital assistants can do a variety of tasks depending on how much you want them to do for you. For example, if you want your digital assistant to be heavily involved in your daily life, you can use the Echo or the Home as the core of your "connected home." You can connect numerous compatible devices to these assistants, including other Bluetooth or networked speakers, lights, thermostats, coffee makers, refrigerators, and even microwaves.

Of course, therein lies the challenge — you must have compatible devices to make a connected home efficient. And let's be honest: Many of us aren't going to buy a connected fridge or Wi-Fi enabled light bulbs just to get the most out of our digital assistants.

What you can do, however, is make use of what you already have. Here are some ways to put your digital assistants to work without committing to a connected home.

Both the Echo and the Home make excellent communication hubs. In the home, they can be used as a local intercom system. Do you have a few Echo Dots or Google

Home Minis? If you do, you're set. You can communicate in any room where another device is present.

Your digital assistant can also make outgoing calls. As long as the device has access to your contacts (or the person you're trying to contact has an Echo or Home), you can easily make the connection. Want to send a text message? No problem! You can dictate a text to anyone in your smartphone's contact list and send it without ever touching your phone.

Aside from communications, the assistants can handle calendars, appointments, emails, and more. You can ask for information relevant to you, like "When is my flight again?" Google Home can recognize your voice, or the voice of anyone in the house, and respond accordingly. There's no worry that anyone's calendar or appointments will be mixed up with yours.

If you want to learn more, search for tutorials online. We've only scratched the surface when it comes to what these digital assistants can do for you.



CLIENT STORIES

ERNEST K.

Our friend and client Ernest K. worked for many years as a side seamer at a large welding company in Urbana, Ohio, that specializes in manufacturing tanks and reservoirs for heavy vehicle air brake systems. This is dangerous work involving hydraulic presses and lots of moving pieces. He was cutting steel plates when a nearby stack fell, crushing his left hand and arm.

Following emergency surgery, he actually returned to work through 2005 but developed complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS). This rendered his arm useless. Surgeons implanted a spinal stimulator to mask the pain signals traveling to the brain. Sadly, even after two revisions of the initial implant and extensive treatment at the Cleveland Clinic, Ernest's symptoms raged on. CRPS is a particular nefarious condition. Symptoms include continuous burning, throbbing pain, sensitivity to touch or cold, skin temperature alternating between sweaty and cold, and muscle weakness and atrophy. Spray from a shower and clothing touching the affected area causes extreme pain. Many aspects of your life change as the pain can be all-consuming and treatment is lifelong. And, though the condition develops in one part of the body, it typically spreads to other areas.

Ultimately, Ernest's loss of use of his left arm was recognized by the Industrial Commission. Also, despite several attempts at



rehabilitation, the Commission finally acknowledged that Ernest's pain and use of only one arm made him unable to perform sustained work, and he was granted permanent total disability.

Obviously, this is a devastating injury at any time, let alone at 42 years old. Ernest inspires me as he continues to live his life and push through his limitations. I am honored to have helped take money worries off his plate.

The Tricky Thing About TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES

DEBILITATING, BUT IT'S DIFFICULT TO PROVE WORKPLACE CONNECTION

Medical researchers are just now beginning to understand just how extensive traumatic brain injuries (TBI) may be. New studies indicate that far more people have experienced a TBI than they or their doctors know. While much of the data comes from studying athletes and veterans, it's becoming clear TBIs may also be a serious problem among workers who experience on-the-job accidents.

However, it's challenging to connect the effects of a TBI to a workplace incident. This means that many Ohioans may be missing out on much-needed workers' compensation benefits. If you suspect you may have suffered a TBI on the job, there are a few things you should know.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate there are approximately 2.5 million TBI-related ER visits each year across the U.S. Around 250,000 people are hospitalized for TBIs annually, and over 50,000 die due to brain injuries.

Accounting for nearly half of all TBIs seen in the ER are falls, followed by being struck by an object and motor vehicle crashes. While data for workplace TBIs isn't available, it's estimated there are approximately 1,200 work-related fatalities caused by a TBI each year, and let's not forget the thousands more that don't result in death. Half of work-related TBI deaths are among employees in the construction, transportation, farming, forestry, and fishing industries.

Falls, being struck by objects, and vehicle accidents cause many injuries across the country to workers from all industries, causing everything from broken bones to serious TBIs. The problem is, brain injuries are often overlooked as more obvious injuries are treated.

Symptoms of a TBI — such as headaches, dizziness, blurred vision, and fatigue — may not develop for several days or weeks after the accident. Because of this, many people fail to get the proper medical treatment they need to prevent more severe problems later. And by that point, it's often difficult to prove that the workplace accident caused the brain injury to qualify for workers' compensation.

If you're experiencing the effects of a traumatic brain injury following a workplace accident, you need legal and medical assistance soon to connect the injury to the accident. This is essential for your workers' compensation claim. Call the team at Monast Law Office at 614-515-2595 today to schedule a free consultation and receive your entitled benefits!



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ANSWER

ABBY'S APPETIZERS

EVERYTHING POPCORN



Everything is the best bagel flavor. This is not a matter of debate. Sprinkle the seasoning on popcorn for a delicious snack that will have people asking, "What does this remind me of?"

INGREDIENTS

- 3/4 cup popcorn kernels
- 2 tablespoons flaky sea salt
- 1 teaspoon black sesame seeds
- 2 teaspoons white sesame seeds
- 2 teaspoons granulated garlic
- 2 teaspoons granulated onion
- 1/3 cup canola oil
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

DIRECTIONS

1. In a small skillet over medium heat, toast sesame seeds. Shake skillet often and cook until white seeds are golden and fragrant, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a small bowl and add garlic, onion, and salt.
2. In a large saucepan, combine popcorn kernels and oil. Cook over medium-high heat, covered, until corn kernels start to pop. Once popping, continue cooking and shaking the pan intermittently until popping ceases, about 3–5 minutes.
3. Transfer popcorn to a large mixing bowl. Pour in butter and toss to coat. Finally, add seasoning, toss again, and serve.

Inspired by Food & Wine magazine.

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4 Rainy Day Activities

ENJOY YOURSELF!

As the weather warms up, the urge to get out of the house becomes stronger. However, any plans you might have can be abruptly canceled due to rain. If you find yourself stuck inside for the day, here are a few activities to keep you occupied.

Get Bakin'

A wet and chilly day is an excellent opportunity to warm yourself up with some baked goods. Bake your favorite snickerdoodle cookies or fudge brownies, and pour yourself a mug full of hot chocolate or cider to get through the stormy day.

some uninterrupted reading. The rain smattering against your windows creates the perfect background noise to delve into the pages of a new adventure.

Create Your Own Film Festival

Having a movie or TV series marathon is another great way to pass the time. You can watch some of the classics, like "Forrest Gump" or "Singing in the Rain," fill the day with "The Lord of the Rings" series, or start a new Netflix show. If you want to involve your kids in the binge-watching, you can let them pick out one of their favorite movies too.

Piece Together a Puzzle

A rainy day is a great opportunity to pull out a puzzle. You can also grab your friends or family members and make the puzzle a team activity. With the whole day ahead of you, you'll have several hours to devote to one of your favorite hobbies.

Don't let the rain keep you down! Instead, take advantage of the weather and enjoy a cozy day at home.

Read a Book

If you have a bookshelf full of novels you've not yet cracked open, a rainy day is the perfect time to jump in. Settle down on the sofa with a cuddly blanket and enjoy