



- Chapter 1: Terry Francona -

Winning Against Deep-Vein Thrombosis (DVT): How a Prime-of-Life Major League Manager Strikes Back

**By Terry Francona
Manager, Boston Red Sox**

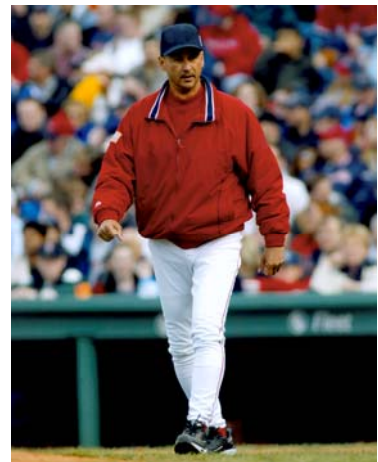
Make no mistake – we all know that life can throw us the occasional curve ball. In professional sports, many athletes are inclined to think they can cover all those curves. We think that because we're conditioned to win and conditioned against health problems.

I learned the hard way that even top-tier athletes and people in the prime of life are not immune. You see, I am a very lucky two-time survivor of pulmonary embolism, a life-threatening complication of deep-vein thrombosis (DVT). It didn't matter that I was the manager of the 2004 World Champion Boston Red Sox. It didn't matter that I was relatively young, active and otherwise healthy. I was affected by DVT just like anybody else.

Initially, I thought I strained my leg muscle during a very light post-surgery workout. But just to be safe, I contacted my doctor. That simple phone call, and ongoing communication with my doctor, turned out to be critical. That's when my treatment for and education about DVT began.

On the team that I manage, my players have a good relationship with our medical staff. We play 162 games a year and work together for nine months, day in and day out. Without question, the sustained interaction between the team and medical staff ensures that we have the health and endurance to play from pre- to post-season.

For me, simply knowing about my own DVT risk is not enough. Now, I am committed to helping others reduce their risk of experiencing this serious condition. I regularly hear from people like me who are eager to share their DVT experiences, and it's encouraging to hear how they have struck out DVT. It proves there is a way to win against this serious condition. And while I don't often share my personal DVT story with my players, they all know about it. To really



make DVT prevention a winning effort, we must increase our awareness and knowledge of it, and we must maintain strong relationships with our healthcare providers. It's that "double play" of knowledge and communication that can best protect our health.

One thing I'm sure of: The more you know about your health, the more you will be prepared when life throws you the unexpected curve ball.

Striking Out Deep-Vein Thrombosis (DVT): Winning is Always a Team Effort

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When I met Terry Francona, the busy manager of the Boston Red Sox baseball team, my first order of business was to diagnose and treat his condition, a life-threatening pulmonary embolism. Just how this silent, vascular threat can suddenly strike a healthy and fit man such as Terry is hard to comprehend.

That brought us to the next order of business: to educate Terry so that like many patients at risk for DVT, he could understand the risks and learn more about prevention. I cannot emphasize strongly enough that recognizing warning signs and symptoms is essential for reducing the chance that DVT will strike.

In Terry's case, just ten days after having knee surgery, he experienced severe chest pains while interviewing for a post as the manager of the Seattle Mariners. As soon as he returned home, he contacted me and that's when we discovered that a DVT blood clot had traveled to both of his lungs. A pulmonary embolism can be fatal, but luckily, Terry sought medical intervention quickly. With DVT, we must realize that it can strike those of us who are healthy or fit, and worse, we are often confronting a silent and stealth condition, which makes it challenging to detect.

To manage DVT risk, there is an essential need for good communication between doctor and patient. In Terry's case, we established a rapport that led to his willingness to understand the "rules of the game" for DVT prevention. While many athletes like to play by their own rules, in the case of DVT, the rules to protect one's health prevail. What followed was an intense communication and education effort. The end result was an informed patient who knew what to do to avoid DVT in the future.

Terry's commitment to learning about DVT risk management expanded into raising awareness among others. And in my own advocacy work for DVT awareness, I firmly share his commitment. Through the Coalition to Prevent DVT, I've worked to increase awareness and establish policy to protect people from this serious condition. I am

passionate about communicating to patients, healthcare professionals, advocates and policymakers that if we all work together, we can fight DVT. We are all on the same team—and we all need to share information so that patients and practitioners alike understand the risks for DVT.

As a physician and vascular expert, I know that each person who learns about his or her risk factors for DVT is one more person who may be spared from an experience such as Terry's. Although fighting DVT is not a game, it is, in fact, an endgame. And I say: Game on!