

# BAD BREAK, GREAT OUTCOME

*Dual surgeries solve  
Golden man's ankle trauma*

**F**or financial advisor Joe Brienza, the distance between excruciating pain and excruciatingly funny is a few weeks, two successful surgeries and an excellent prognosis.

"It's one of those things you just cannot *believe* you did," he begins, setting the stage for his story in the rugged beauty outside Moab, Utah.

No, Brienza says, his severe ankle and leg injuries weren't souvenirs of some thrilling, high-terrain climbing accident. They were the result of his not being able to resist a quick slide down the firefighters' pole connecting the top floor and basement of his client's exquisite custom home. "My uncle was a fireman," he laughs, "and we used to do it all the time as kids." So, with a chance for a midlife encore, he slid. He stopped. He thought he was at the bottom. He jumped.

"But actually," he says, "I was still about 20 feet up."

The diagnosis was harsh. Hard landing. Severely broken ankle. Hairline fracture in opposite leg.

After initial treatment at a Moab hospital, Brienza was driven home to Golden by his wife. She was also the chauffeur—and comedian—when he was seen the next day at Panorama Orthopedics. Brienza recaps, "She kept providing 'color commentary' during the exam. 'Yes, it was a fire pole. No, he's not a fireman.'"



Bharat Desai, M.D., a Panorama Orthopedics & Spine Center orthopedic surgeon specializing in trauma and complex foot and ankle surgery

## AN OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK

The specialist called for Brienza's injuries was Bharat Desai, M.D., a Panorama Orthopedics & Spine Center orthopedic surgeon specializing in trauma and complex foot and ankle surgery. Desai confirmed that the high-impact landing had broken the fibula (the bone on the outside of the ankle) and pylon (the weight-bearing surface on the top of the ankle). Moreover, it had caused friction damage—called facture blisters—to the soft tissue surrounding the fractures. Brienza was scheduled for the first of two surgeries at OrthoColorado Hospital.

"In such traumas, giving the soft tissue time to heal before operating on the fracture lessens the risk of infection," Desai explains.


Just weeks after the second successful surgery, both Desai and Brienza are highly optimistic regarding a long-term outcome without restriction. Brienza recaps, "Dr. Desai does an amazing job in surgery. I'd refer him to anyone. His team's ability to be flexible and customize care for the individual is fantastic." 



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Joe Brienza, right, bounced back quickly from his severe leg and ankle injuries.

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