

Michael and his craftsmanship are creating positive turning points every day.

For adults and children with self-injurious behaviours and sensory disorders, orthotic helmets can provide life-changing treatment. At Steeper, one of our company's core values is Patient Focus and Michael embodies this value every day when he crafts top quality bespoke helmets for our patients.



Case Study
Michael, Orthotic Technician

 **steeper**
Creating life's turning points, together



The story

Michael is an expert in the field of orthotic helmet creation, with over 40 years of experience in the industry. He joined the Steeper team back in 2013 as a technician and has worked across many of our manufacturing departments like plastics and made to measure footwear, but quickly became the company's go-to expert for helmet creation.

He is always looking for new ways to improve his products and help patients, he says, *"It's impossible to know everything in this industry, there are always new developments in technology and care techniques so I'm constantly on the lookout for ways to improve and innovate our designs for the good of the patient."* This approach has served him well in his career and has helped him pioneer new products and new ways of creating these products here at Steeper.

The solution

Michael's skills and attention to detail have been instrumental in the development of new helmet designs that are more comfortable and effective for patients. For example, a patient came to our orthotic clinic needing an orthotic helmet, however, they also had a sensory disorder that made them sensitive to noise and they wore protective earmuffs to help. The *"Status-quo option"* would have been to create a helmet big enough to go over the patients' protective earmuffs, but if they were to be removed, the helmet wouldn't fit anymore. Michael knew there had to be a better way of giving the patient the noise reduction they required from the earmuffs, and the protection they needed from the helmet, and was responsible for creating the first-ever Steeper helmet with built-in earmuffs.

He's also pioneered helmets with tinted visors for patients who are intolerant to daylight - an innovation that's made a world of difference in people's lives.

He's worked with many clinicians over the years, and he says, *"My tip for Orthotists to get the best result first time would be to focus on the circumference and ear-to-ear measurements, if these are correct the fit will be too! However, if it's not suitable to measure your patient or if you*



can't, I'll happily work with you to get the best result."

The turning point

Michael's approach to his work is always patient-centric, and he is willing to go the extra mile to find solutions that meet the unique needs of each individual. His can-do attitude and willingness to try new things have earned him a reputation as a reliable and innovative craftsman. He says,

"My favourite helmets to make are the moulded hard-shell helmets. It's such an interesting process and there is a lot to get right, precision is key as there's not a lot of room for error. I love the challenge of getting right."

In addition to his work crafting helmets at Steeper, Michael also designed and developed the technology used to create our hard-shell helmets. He says, *"In 2015, I designed the mould-forming machine and built it from scratch with support from management and technicians throughout the business. Other options were out there but they were costly, and I didn't feel comfortable signing off on such a large purchase when I knew I could build something just as good and the money could be better spent to further help patients."*

A true specialist, Michael's expertise has been crucial in ensuring that all products and equipment he crafts meet a high standard of quality and effectiveness. Overall, Michael is a dedicated and skilled craftsman who lives by the Steeper mission - to create positive turning points, together.