



## **Hit with a debilitating diagnosis, she let fear take over. But things changed once she followed one key rule.**

Rachel Grumman Bender  
Writer  
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Lisa Cohen had recently “escaped” a career as a lawyer to pursue her passion — photography — when she was hit with a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis in 2001.

The Montclair, N.J., native was saddled with problems, including vision loss in one eye (known as optic neuritis) and fatigue. “Great, I’m a photographer and I can’t see,” she told Yahoo Lifestyle. A steroid treatment helped her regain her sight, but eight years later, Cohen suffered another setback: muscle spasticity, which makes her leg muscles continuously contracted. “It makes it harder for me to stand. It makes it harder for me to walk,” she says.

At first, she let fear take over, limiting what she did to “stay safe.” But Cohen, who describes herself as a fighter by nature, realized there was no reason to let MS rule her life. So she decided to live her life like a “rock star.”



Lisa Cohen isn't letting MS slow her down. (Photo courtesy of Lisa Cohen)

While the disease has progressed to the point that she requires walking sticks, Cohen doesn't let that stop her. She even decided to decorate her walking sticks with a leopard-print covering, which couldn't be more rockstar-like. "The leopard print definitely fits with my style, but also it makes these feel less medical," she says.

Cohen follows several strategies to make her MS more manageable, such as Botox shots in her leg to quell the muscle spasms that make walking difficult and physical therapy, which includes using an antigravity treadmill to practice walking.

She also focuses on helping others. Cohen, who is a chapter ambassador for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and the author of *Overcome the BS of MS*, founded Rockstar Women With MS to empower women living with the condition and provide coaching online since not everyone is up for joining an in-person support group. Cohen also worked on Makeover your MS, a program to give women tips on how to do MS-friendly makeup. "Quick stuff that worked whether you're having problems with your hands and dexterity," she says.

She adds: "I decided to turn my MS into a positive after I became physically disabled."