

Six Million Dollar Man

They don't make adventure series like they used to do. Back in the 1970s, we were all gripped by The Six Million Dollar Man. The futuristic series ran from 1974-1978 and is still fondly remembered today. Lee Majors starred as the former astronaut, Steve Austin, who was lucky to be alive after a terrible accident in the craft he was test piloting. The famous catchphrase, we can re-build him, we have the technology began each episode. He was transformed into a cyborg using bionic implants, that gave him a new right arm, two new legs and a new left eye. This procedure gave him superhuman speed, strength in his arm and incredible seeing ability with his eye. This had never been done before so Austin was closely monitored.

The Office of Scientific Intelligence (OSI), were keen to put Austin's new powers to work and they hired him to be a secret service agent on their behalf. This of course, led to dangerous escapades each week. Austin was a great hero, even without the bionics, with his chiseled good looks and laid back approach. Richard Anderson played Oscar Goldman, the long suffering Director of the OSI. Lindsay Wagner had a recurring role, as Jaime Sommers and she would later appear in her own spin off series, The Bionic Woman. Her bionics were necessary after a skydiving accident. Wagner's show was equally popular as The Six Million Dollar Man and her character was one of the very few women on TV to kick butt.

The 1970s had an obsession with robots and computerized gizmos, so the show captured the spirit of the age. Many future household names were keen to appear as guests on The Six Million Dollar Man. They included Andre the Giant, Stephanie Powers, Joan Van Ark and Vincent Van Patten. Farrah Fawcett, companion to Lee Majors off screen, took part in four episodes.

The show made a huge star of Majors, a success that he was unable to repeat afterwards. It was part of the popular culture as must see TV and it launched a range of merchandise. As a science based show, it was quite accurate in predicting achievements in humans receiving non organic parts. The state of bionics is not yet at the stage of The Six Million Dollar Man but prosthetics have come a long way. There has always been a fascination in fiction for people with superhuman powers. One day, reality will really catch up.