

## EXTRAORDINARY ACTS BY ORDINARY PEOPLE

Did you know there are real life superheroes in the world? Or at least, people who can perform superhuman acts of strength and bravery?

You may have heard some of these amazing stories in the news. Stories about ordinary people suddenly performing extraordinary acts.

One of the most famous examples happened in 1982. A young man, Tony, was working underneath his car that was lifted on jacks. The car suddenly slipped off and fell on Tony, crushing him underneath.

His 50-year-old mother, Angela, found him unconscious, almost dead.

Desperate, she lifted the 3,500 pound car high enough to put them back on the jacks and pull Tony to safety.

This incredible phenomenon is known as 'hysterical strength' or 'superhuman' strength. And it is believed to be caused by the powerful hormone: adrenaline.

Part of the theory behind 'superhuman' strength is that in our everyday lives, we use only a tiny percentage of what our muscles are capable of. But in stressful situations, adrenaline hormones create an emergency response in our bodies. Our hearts beat faster, our breathing speeds up, and our muscles suddenly contract, making them stronger. In life-and-death situations, adrenaline allows us to use our muscles to their full capacity, giving us superhuman strength. However, this phenomenon of superhuman strength is extremely controversial because it's so hard to test. After all, scientists can't trap people under cars, or put people in harm's way just to see what happens. Plus, all the case studies that report superhuman strength tend to involve a loved one in danger. So does the mind or our emotions play a role? Think about the story of the mother in Quebec who singlehandedly fought a polar bear..

The bear, who weighed 700 pounds, was threatening her son and his friend. The mother attacked the bear, fighting and kicking to distract it from her child. She wrestled with the bear until a neighbor was able to shoot it. Neither Tony's mother nor the mother in Quebec had a history of extreme strength. But when their loved ones were in danger and they had the right mental motivation, their bodies could do amazing things. In the right circumstances, maybe we're all superheroes.