

## A BRIEF HISTORY

Thanks to a very raw deal in the genetic inheritance stakes I ended up with a pretty rotten skeletal structure being tall (5'7.5"), with foot size 4.5 (36/37 continental), and broad shoulders, I had the traditional feminine pear-shape but untraditionally it was upside down. It affected my keen interest in competitive sport, my passion for dancing, and by the age of 15 I had to give up wearing heeled shoes because of pain in my left-side sacroiliac joint. I had intensive physiotherapy and even spent a week in hospital recovering from a manipulation under anaesthetic.

## DETERIORATION

Still the problem persisted and by age 21 I virtually gave up sport altogether. By my mid 30's my feet had become very painful to walk on, particularly in tight-fitting shoes, because of metatarsalgia..

Another ten years or so later and moving generally became extremely difficult most of the time. I took up swimming and was offered more physiotherapy.. The Hospital Physiotherapist eventually referred me to the Pain Clinic comprising six specialist consultants who finally decided I had a genuine orthopaedic condition. I was (eventually) sent for an MRI scan. I began to think there might therefore be hope of an operation and - at last - an end to these years of pain. The other, less palatable, alternative was that I would have to live with the condition for the rest of my life. . My Orthopaedic Surgeon did not mince his words: "Your back is a wreck. Come and look at the pictures. There is nothing we can do." To this day I cannot bear to recall the horrific picture that was supposed to be my spine. To add to my depression the Health Service wiped their hands of any further involvement in my case. I was given some painkillers and effectively told to go away and learn to live with it - there were other people who had worse to cope with.

This latter was of little consolation to one who was always so filled with energy and loved to exert oneself to the limit. I could only sit for about ten minutes at a time and then had to lie down for about twenty to recover. If I lay in bed for too long that was also uncomfortable. It was best if I kept moving but not for too long - I had to balance this with resting in between. It was difficult to concentrate on anything for very long because of this constant need to keep changing activity. Then one morning I woke up and could not raise my head from the pillow without causing a serious headache such as I'd never experienced before. I was given a neck collar and sent for x-rays. The collar turned into a brace. The doctor said it was just more of the same condition.

## DESPAIR

I got so low I contemplated suicide. What had I to look forward to but a lifetime of extreme pain and inability? No travelling, no sport, very little social life (an excessively large, high-backed, wheelchair was not always welcome in people's homes, let alone the problems with its transportation). A life- time of isolation was not my scene and I would be a burden to my children.

A second opinion, paid for privately, provided me with the first comprehensible diagnosis - all the discs in my spine had collapsed, too many to make a fusion of the vertebrae possible. Most people with the condition are, apparently, virtually bedridden. An operation to hinge

the vertebrae might help, but as my musculature was in fairly good condition because 'I had kept going', it was decided that what I would gain in skeletal improvement I would lose in muscular ability. Better to leave well alone. This privately paid for intervention resulted in improved palliative care from the NHS in the provision of the high-backed wheelchair and other aids.

## THE ALTERNATIVE WAY

An Aunt suggested remedial massage. My case was too long term and too costly to receive this from the NHS with, as they saw it, little or no chance of improvement. The Remedial Masseuse not only ministered to my physical needs but for the first two years provided the psychological support I so badly needed, and, more importantly, the understanding of the condition that helped me in the managing of it.

One thing led to another. This amazing remedial therapist restored my faith and confidence in myself and began making inroads also into the healing of my wrecked body. It was a slow process, one which also involved learning to live within my capabilities so as not to overstrain the muscles which, from my understanding, were having to do twice or thrice the normal amount of work because the spine was too weak itself to support me in the way it was meant to.

It took about ten years in total. The Remedial Masseuse began suggesting other ways to further the progress that was beginning to be noticeable. Her recommendation that I should see a Nutritionist met with initial scepticism. However, anything was worth a try. This Nutritionist/Iridologist went through the whole of my and my family's medical history. She came up with a diet that she maintained would help me. It was quite tough initially. She also eventually suggested I tried a very strong (and costly) remedy she had discovered that was supposed to help revitalise the cartilage. I decided to give it a go. She said it would take two to three months for the effects to be noticeable. Two-and-a-half months, almost to the day, I began to experience less pain in my neck. Some years on and progress continues.

## RESTORATION

I have only told the important things that I think may help others who are given negative diagnoses regarding long-term conditions. If somebody believes you can achieve healing, and you believe and want it yourself, then with determination it can happen. There is another school of belief that all illness is influenced by our environment, what we eat, what we do with our bodies, how we think and our general disposition towards life. Even inherited stuff can be disposed of. Today I no longer experience pain, only a certain amount of occasional discomfort if I over-do things. The wheelchair, crutches, and even the arthritis sticks are now a thing of the past. If I walk on uneven ground I use a walking pole - a far cry from the days when I would not even dare to go out, even on crutches, without an escort.

## MASAI WALKING

The final improvement to my balance and confidence, leading me to walk without sticks was the discovery of MBT shoes. I still experience very painful feet even when doing a small amount of walking in ordinary shoes. With small, odd-shaped feet and curled toes also, it was extremely hard to find shoes to fit properly, let alone walk comfortably in. Once again I was

very sceptical. However, as soon as I tried on a pair my friends said my face was a picture. I bought my first pair at the end of May 2004. Within two months I bought a pair of sandals also. I was so impressed with the changes these shoes were making to my body, and my confidence, I decided there and then to share these benefits with others and took up the training and a dealership.

### COULD YOU BENEFIT?

MBTs are not ordinary shoes, they are a training and fitness tool and therefore it is important that wearers receive training in the correct usage of the shoes. Worn correctly they will at least improve, and even cure, existing muscular and skeletal problems. They will also improve circulation and assist with toning the body. Those who wear them (correctly) also gain a general sense of improved well-being. I have had customers walk out of my Studio referring to them as "Magic!", "It's like walking on air!", "Absolutely heavenly!", "I never thought I would be able to walk properly again". Whatever your problem, or even if you wish to use them purely as a fitness tool (as do the Wasps Rugby team), please give me a call to arrange for a free consultation and training session. Visits to groups can also be arranged.